

# HOW THEY DID IT LIFE STORIES



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FIELD-MARSHAL HERMANN GOERING

*Govindlal Shrivastava,  
Motilal, Bombay.*

# FIELD-MARSHAL HERMANN GOERING

*by*

P. R. WETZLAR-MÜHLENS

PALLAS PUBLISHING CO., LTD.

12-13 HENRIETTA STREET, LONDON, W.C.2

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY  
MACRAYS LIMITED CHATHAM

very difficult to admire or even to approve his actions and views

No doubt, as Mr Ward Price, one of his greatest admirers in England has observed, he is of the tough 'Prussian type'. Most of his ancestors were soldiers or civil servants. The spirit of the Junkers, the Prussian gentry, has been modified in him—partly through his own experiences and partly through the extraordinary events which led to the coming to power of the Nazi Party.

His love of uniforms is a standing joke in Germany and abroad. Not all the anecdotes they tell of him are complimentary. There is the story that he has duplicates of his medals sewn on his pyjamas. Then there is the Lohengrin story, untrue, no doubt, but rather characteristic. It is said that the Fuehrer went to the Opera one night and was so impressed by the singer who took the part of Lohengrin that he commanded him to come to his box and receive his congratulations. The singer, deeply touched by the sign of such high approval, did not even take the time to change his stage costume which consisted of glittering armour with a plumed helmet. Hitler, having been called out of his box to attend to some urgent message, returned to find the singer standing with his back to the door. He glanced at him and remonstrated with a shake of the head.

I say, Goering, this is a bit *too much*.

And yet the plumed helmet and glittering armour would have suited Goering's portly figure. He has something of the *condottieri* in his spiritual make up characteristic of those bold and unscrupulous leaders of mercenary bands whose colourful exploits form an

integral and remarkable part of late mediæval history

A man of many parts—that is the present verdict on Field Marshal Goering. To write the biography of a contemporary is like painting a portrait of a model who never keeps still. Impressions and changing opinions difficult to co-ordinate, the contradictory testimony of friends and opponents, the shifting sands of daily events, all combine to make it an almost impossible task to present an accurate description of a man who has been accused and defended, convicted and acquitted without ever finding an impartial judge. Only posterity can be that judge and at present Field Marshal Goering is very much alive.

\* \* \* \* \*

With the possible exceptions of Von Papen and Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, Hermann Goering was the only Nazi leader who had gained a certain measure of fame before the 'Bohemian corporal' as old Hindenburg called Hitler, came to power. He came of a family of Prussian landed gentry—he had won the *Pour le Mérite* cross in the war—the highest decoration for valour bestowed upon only seventy-one others—he was mentioned a great many times in dispatches. Yet without Hitler and his movement he would have remained at the best an efficient civil aviator, content to live in a Munich villa with his beautiful young Swedish wife who also enjoyed a substantial income. It was the Nazi movement which gave Goering his big chance and made him

one of the most-discussed, the most-hated and best-loved men in the world.

Several libraries could be filled with books written on Nazi-ism and all the tremendous changes it has wrought, not only in Germany but also on every continent. Its growth was certainly more rapid than that of early Christianity and if one can accept the theories of Alfred Rosenberg, the Russo-German author of anti-Jewish and anti-Bolshevist books and pamphlets, its roots go back to even more remote myths and beginnings than do those of the Christian faith. Yet even without its visible achievements it cannot be dismissed as a crude and chaotic basis for propaganda. Hitler's *My Struggle* is certainly a piece of extremely bad literature, but its ideas and premises deserve serious consideration even from those who cannot accept them.

Field-Marshal Hermann Goering has reached his high position through Nazi-ism. It is only fitting that before we tell the story of his life we should examine the movement which is his creed and the foundation of his existence.

Apart from the unquestionable genius of its leader, Nazi-ism was helped to success by two factors. One was the disastrous 'peace' dictated at Versailles; the other the weakness and incapacity to rule of the German Left-Wing and Centrum Governments during the years 1919-1933.

Much has been said to condemn the greedy, near-sighted, even stupid policy of the Western Powers which made the treaties signed at Versailles, Sevres, St. Germain and Trianon such tragic failures. To-day, less than twenty years later, little remains

of the terms and stipulations contained in them. They are in striking contrast to the two treaties made by the 'Iron Chancellor,' Bismarck, in 1866 and 1871. In 1866 Austria had been defeated at Königgrätz and Prussia could have absorbed it without any difficulty. Bismarck, well aware of the heavy going which was still ahead of Prussia, wisely refrained from such a disastrous step—instead of making a vassal of Austria, he acquired a most useful ally. Again in 1871 he did not impose on France terms which were impossible to fulfil—he avoided the course which less than fifty years later was adopted by greedy Clemenceau, egocentric Lloyd George, and weary, disillusioned Wilson. The treaty signed in the Hall of Mirrors created a united Germany, but for decades it did not crush France. It ensured a peace lasting forty years and while it paved the way for Gambetta and the Paris Commune, France got over its effects economically and politically in a comparatively short time.

It was different in 1919 when the tables were turned in the same Hall of Mirrors. The Austro-Hungarian monarchy was dismembered and under the slogan of 'self-determination' a reshuffling of nationalities was made which—among other things—led to the *Anschluss* of Austria, the arising of the Sudeten German problem, the crippling of Hungary and the assignment of different minorities to different States. During those weeks Wilson's idealistic plan became a travesty. While he championed the creation of homogenous States, hundreds of thousands of Germans, Poles, Hungarians, etc., were forcibly incorporated by countries whose language



the Iron Cross (both second and first class). But now the war had ended, the Kaiser had fled and Germany was in the throes of revolution. It was a chaotic nightmare of civil war; the mark plunged headlong into an incredible abyss and people carried billions in their pockets for small change. Starvation, general strikes, unemployment, the foreign occupation of the Ruhr and the Saar were some of the problems with which the six socialist leaders in Berlin, called 'People's Delegates,' had to cope. The moderate socialists, under the leadership of Ebert, wanted to restore order; they felt like the 'Magician's Apprentice' in Goethe's poem, who raised spirits he was unable to control. Those of the Left Wing wanted to go on with the revolution, but they did not know what direction to follow.

The revolution had spread to Bavaria whose capital, Munich, was a second home to Adolf Hitler. The Wittelsbachs had been dethroned. First a Republic and then a Soviet were set up. The Red Terror claimed many victims; bourgeois hostages were murdered in cold blood in the cellars of the Hotel Bayrischer Hof.

Hitler had spent the winter, 1918-19, at Traunstein, a military depot near Munich. Although he did nothing to attack the Communists, he aroused their suspicions, and on 27th April three Red legionaries tried to arrest him. He managed to frighten them off—at least that is his version of the story—and remained alive to see the Republican Government in Berlin suppress the Bavarian Soviet, just as it had stamped out a similar outbreak in Northern Germany. After Ebert had allied himself

with the remnant of the army under the leadership of von Hindenburg, and with the help of his Party-comrade Noske ended the rule of the Bavarian Socialist Soviet Republic on 1st May, 1919, Hitler joined the Military Intelligence Service.

It was in Munich that the National-Socialist Party was born—for the German Workers' Party soon added these two words to its title—and that Hitler met the men who inspired his ideology and launched him on his way to power. One of them was Dietrich Eckart, a poet, one-time feuilleton editor of the strongly monarchist *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* and author of a number of singularly unsuccessful plays. He conceived the idea of Nordic superiority, the whole theory of 'Aryanism' and of the lower race-elements of the Jews. The Frenchman, Count Gobineau, and the Briton, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who had adopted German nationality, were the first to outline these ideas. They were introduced to Eckart by the Russian architect, Alfred Rosenberg. Eckart and Rosenberg formed the Thule Society, so called after the legendary island of the North-German myths, the object of the Society being to expound and apply to practical politics the doctrine of the Aryan race.

At the same time a group of young officers used to meet in another Munich café. They called themselves the 'Iron Fist,' and their leader was the Reichswehr captain, Ernst Röhm.

It was Röhm and his comrades who crushed the Munich Soviet Republic on 1st May, 1919. A terrible massacre in which even some Russian prisoners-of-war were killed by mistake, was followed by the arrest

they did not understand. Frontiers were created with complete disregard for geography. Many a farm was cut in two with the result that the farmer had to get a pass whenever he wanted to milk his cows, as his stables were in one country and his house in another. A ditch, holding water for two months a year, was declared to be a 'navigable channel,' and as such became a natural boundary. The railway station of a town was given to one country while the town itself remained in the other. It was the worst muddle ever caused on the continent of Europe and hardly a single nation was satisfied with it. Those who shared the spoils clamoured for more and in some cases took it by force; while those who were the losers looked into the future with black despair. By neglecting to uphold the Austro-Hungarian monarchy as an economic entity, the creators of the treaties paved the way for a new war.

Turkey and Bulgaria were both 'relieved' of considerable territories. Of these two countries Turkey again went to war, chased the Greeks out of Asia Minor and regained most her losses by the treaty of Lausanne. It needed a man like Kemal to achieve such a victory; but it showed with evident strength how flimsy and ill-constructed were the original treaties.

Of all the Central Powers Germany suffered comparatively the least territorial loss; but she was burdened with reparations reaching astronomical figures which crippled her economically and made her a ready prey to revolutions and extremist factions.

During the night of 5th-6th November, 1918, news of the Kiel and Wilhelmshaven revolution spread through Germany. More than a month previously the two war chiefs, Ludendorff and Hindenburg, had appointed a new Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden ; he it was who had to sue for a quick armistice as the collapse of the German army was imminent.

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of most of the members of the Thule Society, but Alfred Rosenberg and Rudolf Hess—later famous as Hitler's deputy—escaped prison and death. On 2nd May, the Government troops occupied Munich and set up a reign of terror. From that date the Reichswehr ruled Munich, although nominally a Social-Democratic Government was still in power. At the head of the Reichswehr stood General von Epp; Captain Ernst Roehm was his political adviser and actual head of the régime. Roehm controlled the secret store of weapons which had been collected after the Versailles Treaty had ordered their destruction; possessing the necessary arms it was no difficult matter to form a volunteer corps of unemployed young men.

Dietrich Eckart, Ernst Roehm, Alfred Rosenberg—*these were the three men who prepared the ground* for Hitler's coming. There was, however, a fourth, Gottfried Feder, an unsuccessful inventor who attacked capitalism because it was in the hands of the Jews. Feder tried to get into touch with Roehm and his company, and the 'Iron Fist' gradually came to accept his theories which dovetailed snugly with their own aims and offered slogans for easy propaganda.

In the meantime the 'German Workers' Party,' in which Hitler delivered his first speeches, was still meeting. It had a membership roll of forty. Its Reich chairman was the journalist Karl Harrer, its founder the locksmith Anton Drexler. Hitler joined the Party and soon enlarged it.

But the Reichswehr found him another occupation immediately after the overthrow of the Soviet

Government. He was used as an informer and was thus enabled to follow one of his own principles which he so pungently expressed: "There will be no peace in the land until there is a body hanging from every lamp-post."

Later he was allowed to give lectures to the Reichswehr troops—mostly anti-Semitic speeches which apparently came within the scope of the 'educational courses' which Roehm and his companions had organised for the benefit of the soldiers. Hitler then made friends with Hermann Esser, then barely twenty years old, and worked in the Press Department of the Munich Reichswehr District Headquarters. He also got into a closer relationship with Feder and Drexler, and proving himself to be a born orator, he soon persuaded the leaders of the German Workers' Party that they should risk a somewhat larger meeting than the hitherto limited sessions in the back room of a tavern. The first attempt was an ignominious failure: only seven members of the Society turned up. But an advertisement in an anti-Semitic weekly worked the trick and the next meeting had an attendance of eighty. Hitler felt that success was on its way. But there came a split in the Party; Harrer, its Chairman, who was antagonistic to anti-Semitism, opposed Hitler. Drexler supported Hitler; but his progress was painfully slow.

Then he met Roehm whose frank and murderous energy constituted a particularly reassuring support. Roehm joined the German Workers' Party and brought his soldiers and officers into it. Dietrich Eckart, whom Hitler met about this time, advised



the young orator to reserve for himself the right to conduct his Party's propaganda—propaganda being the most important weapon any political unit can wield. He thought that he would use Hitler as a mouthpiece while Hitler would ensure for himself the Party's leadership by controlling its most important function. Karl Harrer was still against him while Anton Drexler hesitated between the two. Then Hitler declared that the Party needed a programme and in February 1920 they put forward twenty five points. These included the demand for a greater Germany for equality—they clamoured for the abolition of the Peace Treaties for land and colonial territory in which to take care of the surplus population—they stated the necessity for depriving the Jews of German citizenship and advocated the abolition of unearned income and confiscation of war time profits—they demanded the nationalisation of all commercial trusts land reforms the formation of a national army control of the Press liberty of all religious denominations (but only in so far as these did not constitute a danger to the State) and finally the centralisation of State authority over the whole Reich.

On 24th February the Party held the first great mass meeting in the hall of the Munich Hofbrauhaus. Harrer had resigned as he considered the programme and the propaganda of the Party to be dangerous and false. Drexler took his place. The principal speaker at this meeting was not Hitler but a nationalist lecturer Dr Dingfelder. It was Hitler however who introduced the programme and made a success of it—at least according to his own conviction.

In March, 1920, some sections of the Reichswehr rose in open revolt and tried to overthrow the Government with its Reich President, Ebert. General von Lüttwitz and Captain Ehrhardt marched into Berlin with a brigade. An almost unknown politician named Kapp was set up as Chancellor of the Reich; for a few days the rebels controlled Berlin. But the Reich Government retired to Weimar and amid a general strike of workers and employees suppressed the revolt without much difficulty. Hitler was sent with Dietrich Eckart by the Munich Reichswehr to Berlin; it was the first flight of his life in a rickety old aeroplane. At Jüterborg they had to land; the aerodrome was occupied by strikers. It was a strange prank of Fate that when they got to Berlin they were saved by a Hungarian Jew, Trebitsch-Lincoln (an adventurer who was in turn an English clergyman, an M.P., a spy, and official adviser first to Kapp, then to Ludendorff, ending up as a Buddhist monk in Ceylon) and told that they must return at once; Kapp had fled and the *Putsch* was ended.

But in Munich the Reichswehr had acted on its own. The Social-Democratic Government was overthrown and replaced by a Right-Wing Cabinet with Gustav von Kahr as Premier. Hitler had achieved a tremendous gain; Bavaria was now ruled by a Government which gave free reign to the Right Wing. The new Police Chief, Pöhner, sympathised with all Right-Wing parties. His principal assistant, Dr. Frick, was particularly allied to the National-Socialists. He controlled newspapers, censored posters, supervised meetings; Frick's officers in

mufti took part in the flogging of hecklers and political opponents then suddenly transformed into guardians of public order took them into protective custody

In February 1921 Hitler summoned a meeting in the biggest hall of the city the Krone Circus It was attended by only four thousand people instead of the expected eight thousand but at a third meeting the hall was packed

About the same time the Party produced its own organ The *Völkischer Beobachter* had been a small local gossip sheet It had only become anti-Semitic in 1920 In 1921 it got into difficulties and was put up for sale Ernst Röhm persuaded General von Epp that the Reichswehr ought to provide the Party to which it was closely allied with a newspaper Von Epp acquiesced and Dietrich Eckart bought the *Völkischer Beobachter* for the amazingly small sum of 60 000 marks

Hitler had still one great obstacle to surmount before he could become absolute leader of his Party In the second half of 1920 and the beginning of 1921 the movement had split up into two groups The first consisted of the original founders (Drexler Korner Berchtold) the second of the group around Hitler Dietrich Eckart Alfred Rosenberg Feder and Rudolf Hess Hermann Esser was vacillating between the two coteries

In July 1921 Hitler went to Berlin to take elocution lessons in order to get rid of his Austrian dialect and to strengthen his voice While he was away from Munich Julius Streicher a violent anti-Semitic agitator tried to persuade Drexler that he

should move the Party headquarters to Berlin; Hitler could go on agitating in Munich. Streicher used an intermediary named Dickel; his aim, of course, was to gain the leadership of the movement by getting Hitler away from the centre of events.

But Dietrich Eckart discovered the plan and notified Hitler by telegram.

He arrived in a rage, accused Drexler of treason, and then announced his resignation from the Party.

This seemed a terrible blow to all concerned. Hitler had developed into a public power; he was forming useful connections in many places; he had been invited to houses where his proletarian friends would be shown the back door; through Dietrich Eckart he owned the *Völkischer Beobachter* and through Roehm he had gained the protection and goodwill of both Reichswehr and police. Esser joined Hitler. Drexler and his smaller section had to capitulate, and Hitler dictated the terms of capitulation. He was elected First Chairman with absolute authority; Drexler had to be content with the decorative but powerless position of Honorary Chairman. Committees were stopped; there were only reporters who had to receive the Fuehrer's commands. Julius Streicher had returned to Nuremberg. From 29th July, 1921, Hitler was the absolute Fuehrer of the National-Socialist movement. He strengthened his position by appointing as business manager of the Party his personal friend, Max Amann, and announced that Munich would always remain its centre. For this he had good reasons, for his whole foundation and his main support consisted in the goodwill of the Reichswehr.

Not very long after this, on that momentous July day, Hitler met for the first time the former Air Force Captain and then student at Munich University, Hermann Goering.

## II

HERMANN GOERING was born on 12th January, 1893, in the Marienbad Sanatorium near Rosenheim. His mother had travelled several thousand miles in order that her child should be born on German soil, enduring with commendable love for the Fatherland the long and unpleasant sea trip.

There can be no doubt about the gentility of his family, or about the nobility of his descent. While most of the leaders of Nazi Germany may have some difficulty in proving their genealogical data beyond a certain point, it is certain that the 'Geringks' have existed in Prussia since 1570. Jürgen Geringk was a school-teacher and clerk at the court; his son became a tax-collector, his grandson an artisan, his great-grandson a merchant of some importance and a councillor of his home-town.

This councillor had two sons, Johannes and Michael. The latter served the King in Stargard, and being of a stubborn nature, and a man who insisted on his rights, he incurred the enmity of his chief. By asserting his prerogatives he lost both position and estate and died, leaving ten children without means or prospects.

His brother Johannes, a man of some wealth, took under his roof one of these children, the boy Michael Christian Goering, and this Michael Christian became Hermann Goering's great great grandfather.

Although Hermann Goering's only career has been that of a soldier, it appears that his ancestor did not hold such a life in any great esteem. Michael Christian was a man of huge stature, and the King of Prussia wanted such men for his bodyguard—be they princes or beggars. Michael Christian had to buy his freedom and so he hired two other young men to serve his time in the Prussian army. He went to Berlin, became auditor of the Prussian Exchequer and later regimental Quartermaster to the new regiment of the Rhine. Thus did Hermann Goering's ancestors come to the Rhine where later their descendant spent his childhood.

Michael Christian Goering, a wise and ambitious man, became Chancellor of the Inland Revenue, Minister for War—and later, when the French invaded the mark, he was held as a hostage. His liberation cost him a considerable sum which he tried to recover by going to law. The French, however, paid no attention whatsoever to such a naive conception of war and hostages.

Michael Christian Goering's second son, Christian Heinrich, was the Field Marshal's great grandfather. He also became a civil servant. His son, Hermann's grandfather, studied first medicine then law. He spent his life in Emmerich as Councillor of the War Court, which meant that his court had both civil and military jurisdiction. He had inherited a

articles about his childhood in Africa and Haïti. As a matter of fact he never visited any of these places ; nor, be it said to his credit, did he ever pretend that he had.

### III

HERMANN GOERING wanted to become a soldier. It was an early obsession and, as the little boy became older, it grew to an almost fanatical determination. Nor was there any opposition from his family. Civil service or the army—there could be no other career for a Goering.

He spent the first years of his life in Fürth, in the friendly house of Frau Graf. Then Bismarck recalled his father from Haiti and gave him an appointment in the German Foreign Office. Dr. and Frau Goering were only too happy to return from the noxious climate of the exotic island. They took a house in Friedenau, a Berlin suburb, and, of course, they took Hermann with them.

Hermann Goering's official biographer, Erich Gritzbach, delights in describing the admiration felt by the small boy for everything connected with soldiers and military activities. His favourite excursions were to Potsdam, where the spirit of Prussian militarism still hovered around the hideous red-brick buildings. Johann, the faithful family butler, had to smuggle the swords and caps of officer-guests into his room so that he could play with them. To young Hermann the swaggering stories of his half-

brother Karl a cadet in Lichterfelde were infinitely preferable to any fairy tales And of course all Christmas and birthday presents had to be tin soldiers guns and toy weapons

In 1898 Dr Goering retired on pension Hermann was distraught his stubborn clinging to Berlin and his beloved soldiers was more than the mere naughtiness of a five year-old child He had almost to be dragged to the station by force The family moved to *Burg Veldenstein* a beautiful old castle Thus after a few happy care-free months young Hermann soon became reconciled The old romantic castle with its turrets bastions parapets secret passages courtyards and rambling stables was a veritable paradise for an enterprising young soldier He soon organised the boys of the village into a free corps and waged exciting wars in and around the *Burg* His sisters and the daughters of the *Frau Graf* were the beautiful damsels whom he and his trusted knights had to defend and protect

One thing cannot be denied young Hermann had courage he showed it in youth just as Hermann Goering Field Marshal and grim henchman of Adolf Hitler has proved his mettle time and again

Bored by playing the defender in Veldenstein he decided to change sides and to lead the attackers Before setting out he called to the garrison

Just wait for me I won't be back for some time but I'll come by a way you least expect

The rocky hill on which the castle stands is almost four hundred feet high Hermann marched his troop into the valley and at the foot of the precipice he addressed his boys



small estate from his mother and he always adopted a happy middle course in life

Hermann Goering's father set out to follow in the staid uneventful footsteps of his ancestors. Never for a moment did he dream that the birth of a new united Germany would send him far afield from the peaceful vineyards of the Rhine to the exotic shores of Africa and Haiti

He studied at Bonn following the traditional life of the *Korpsstudent* and taking part in sixty three duels. Some eighty years later his son was instrumental in abolishing this rather barbaric custom which merely served to embellish the features of German youths with martial looking cuts and scars. He became a county judge in Alsace Lorraine and later a Court Councillor at Metz. He did his duty as *Familienater* his first wife died after the birth of their fifth child. He also fought in the wars of 1866 and 1870 although without special distinction.

When the problem of colonies became acute in Germany he recognised the possibilities of an overseas appointment and succeeded in being nominated as the first Governor of the South African German Protectorate. In 1885 at the age of 46 he sailed for Africa.

Dr Heinrich Ernst Goering was followed to Africa by his second wife Franciska Tiefenbrunn, who joined him a year later after her first son had been born. She took the child with her and heroically endured the dangers and difficulties of a not very enviable job. German South Africa was hardly peaceful and Dr Goering had to fight King

'We'll climb up here where it's steepest'

Some of the boys were rather terrified at the prospect of such a feat but Hermann insisted

If you are afraid stay where you are but you'll never play with me again!

With five comrades he began the ascent clinging to precarious footholds to trees and bushes and then when there was no vegetation to crevices in the sheer towering rocks. The noise made by the boys in the valley disclosed Hermann's escapade to the girls in the castle. The servants hurried to the north side of the battlements arriving at the very moment when the boy swung himself over the parapet. He was very angry because the defenders were not yet in their places. He called for ropes to help his comrades who had got stuck a few feet below the parapet and later was highly indignant when the reward for the daring exploit was nothing more flattering than a sound flogging.

At the age of six Hermann was sent to the village school but he had no love for the company of yokels and his sisters' governess was unable to keep him in order. His parents therefore decided to send him to nearby *Fürth* where he boarded with a teacher's family. Now *Fürth* has a strong Jewish community—Jacob Wassermann the famous German novelist was born there and described it in his moving autobiography—and young Hermann found a peculiar pleasure in Jew-baiting. His favourite pastime was to set his mastiff on them. Strangely enough his teachers failed to appreciate his zeal later so commendable during the course of his

political career. He was punished time and again and keenly resented the punishment.

But it is not by chance that Hermann Goering has since become renowned as a strategist. After the fourth or fifth caning he decided to play truant in an original way. He simply went to bed and decided to stay there. He was heartily bored with school, anyhow, and furious at being an 'exile' while his brothers and sisters stayed in the beautiful castle.

After three days his landlady sent for the doctor. Of course he could not find anything wrong, but young Hermann complained of 'terrible pain.' Another doctor arrived and Hermann remained in bed. He kept it up for fourteen days, certainly a proof of unusual will-power and concentration of purpose. At last his mother arrived and tried to influence him by gentle words and sensible advice. He remained defiant. A third doctor appeared. The malingerer was threatened with transfer to hospital and the application of sandbags to his feet. *But Hermann remained adamant. He stayed in bed for more than four weeks.* To while away the time he sent for some tin soldiers and waged imaginary battles on the counterpane. He also asked for two large mirrors. When asked about their purpose, he replied slyly.

"Don't you see? I treble my army with the mirrors . . . I am a real general!"

Surely a sentiment which would have done credit to the past-master of propaganda, Dr. Joseph Goebbels!

Two days before the end of term Hermann suddenly 'recovered.' During the long vacation he

travelled with his parents, sisters and brothers through Munich and Salzburg to Castle Mauterndorf owned at the time by his godfather. He was ten years old and a keen observer. Mauterndorf became his second home and there he spent all his summer holidays during the subsequent eleven years.

Mauterndorf is in the midst of rugged romantic mountains and valleys. The castle with its stair cases, secret passages, vaults and towers is even more elaborate and rambling than Veldenstein. Hermann again organised the peasant boys. Their games consisted of bridge-building, tree felling and erecting dams and locks in the small tributaries of the Taurach.

It's a joy to be alive! he told his father. Eagerly he listened to the tales of the old foresters about the glorious past of the castle and its vicinity.

I must become a soldier! declared young Hermann. When he was again punished for embarking on another climb, daring to the point of madness, he gave his school books to the gipsies, saying to them: I haven't any money, but you can sell these. I shan't need them anyhow. I'm not going to school any more!

But his father was of a different opinion, and Hermann was duly sent back to Furth. Here he persisted with his Jew baiting, with the result that Dr. Goering was asked politely to remove his son. Thereupon the boy was transferred to a boarding school at Ansbach.

The stern discipline, however, did not suit the youngster. One day he felt that he could not stand it any longer. He packed his few belongings and

told the beadle to send his bed to his landlady in Furth should he fail to come back. Having sold his violin and scraped together some money, he went to Furth and there waited for the parental storm to break over his head. But Dr Goering, moved by so much perseverance and feeling himself unable to cope with his son's reckless spirits, decided to send the boy to the cadets' school in Karlsruhe. Thus was Hermann's ambition fulfilled.

He seemed to find this atmosphere more congenial. At least there were no complaints against his behaviour and his half-yearly reports praised his intelligence and sense of discipline.

After spending some time at Lichterfelde where his half brother Karl had finished his military training, he graduated as a lieutenant. So greatly did Dr Goering appreciate the honours won by his son, that he presented him with a thousand marks to be spent as he wished. With characteristic quickness Hermann decided to visit Italy. He invited his father's chauffeur, Sepp Rusch, to accompany him. Together they wandered across the mountains to northern Italy. They almost met with a fatal accident on Lake Garda, where they ventured out in a canoe in spite of the warning of the fishermen. Their boat was overturned in a storm and only in the nick of time were they saved.

'It was the first time,' says Goering, 'that I fought for my life. It is a wonderful feeling to triumph over the powers of nature.'

The craving for triumph by dint of great personal valour is one of the leading traits of Field-Marshal Hermann Goering, a quality which he

has proved again and again. Courage mingled with a rather grim sense of humour, has made him possibly one of the most likeable—or to his enemies the least hateful—figures of Nazi Germany

\* \* \* \* \*

Hermann was hardly twenty when his father died on 6th December, 1916. Financially and emotionally it was a heavy blow for the family and Hermann suffered just as much as his mother and the rest of his closest relations. Forced thenceforth to stand on his own feet he impatiently awaited his first commission.

This he received in January 1914 when he was appointed as lieutenant to the Prince Wilhelm Infantry Regiment Number 112.

I hope we shall soon be at war, he exclaimed. No sentimental nonsense about pacifism for him! War meant quick promotion opportunities for showing off his courage. But when he reported on the Alsace Lorraine border at Mulhouse he had no idea how soon his craving for war would be fulfilled.

The first question put to him by his commanding officer was of course about his financial resources.

How much is your allowance? he asked. In pre-war Germany every young officer of a crack regiment had to have some income beyond his pay.

Nothing, replied Goering. I have a small fortune but it's enough for me, he added.

His patrimony was certainly not large but he did not worry about that. He paid the round of formal visits which every new officer was expected

to make at a whirlwind pace and thereafter selected his friends carefully. For six months he led the usual life of a young subaltern, drinking and riding, not neglecting the fair sex and winning some affection even if he himself had not much to give.

These months were filled with tension which demanded added vigilance on the frontier and almost continuous manœuvres. On one occasion during these manœuvres Lieutenant Goering was in command of a company and his 'enemy' was a Major. Goering tried to outflank his 'enemy,' but when his troop was detected two minutes before the attack, he simply noted that his own was the superior force and calmly declared that the major was his prisoner. The senior officer spluttered in his rage, but he could not do anything about it.

On the outbreak of war Hermann Goering was twenty-one. On the 29th June, 1914, the fatal shots were fired at Sarajevo. A month later European war was imminent. On the 27th July, Hermann Goering wrote a letter to his mother, in which he made no mention of war or its dangers, but expressed his gratitude for his youth and the happiness his parents had given him—even if he had proved rather a handful to manage.

The next day: general mobilisation. First the regiment retired farther from the frontier, but was soon sent against its own former garrison. Goering was detailed to lead a strong patrol of cyclists. He was lucky in his first real military engagement—and a few weeks later he had become a first-lieutenant and was wearing the Iron Cross (second class).

He took part in the battles around Mulhouse and

then was attacked by the ailment to which he had been subject throughout his life and from which he had been laid up several times—rheumatism of the joints. Furious at this cruel stroke of fate which deprived him of the thrills of battle, he shook his fist in impotent rage, for Hermann Goering could never regard war from the point of view of a Remarque or a Dos Passos; his whole adolescence had been a preparation for the business of killing and now he felt cheated of his right to follow his vocation.

While in hospital he was visited by Bruno Loerzer, a fellow-officer who had been his bosom-friend during these peaceful months in Mulhouse. Loerzer announced that he was going to take part in a training course for flyers and he persuaded Goering to try to obtain a transfer from his regiment, and thereupon, with a sudden enthusiasm, he sent a telegram making the necessary application. The commanding officer of his regiment being a man of slow decision, did not reply.

On the day of his discharge from hospital, however, he took off in Loerzer's plane and flew with him as passenger to Darmstadt and then to Stenay, where the 25th Air Squadron was stationed, under the command of the Crown Prince. Of course there was an unholy row and Hermann Goering had to submit to a volley of ironical and insulting invective; but his arbitrary transfer was approved and his life as an aviator began.

Goering's good fortune continued, for he was detailed to act as observer for his friend Loerzer. The two men understood each other perfectly.





FIELD MARSHAL G. FRANK  
FUEHRER

IN THE

Goering quickly absorbed all he had to learn—and that was no small item; he learnt photography, radio, electrical technique, parachute jumping and many other things. But he displayed a natural talent for everything and soon he and Loerzer were decorated with the Iron Cross, first class.

One complaint marred the enjoyment of life, namely, that he had no time to learn flying himself. There were not enough machines and his observer job constituted his sole activity. In due course, therefore, he asked for four weeks' leave, and in the autumn of 1915 spent a month at Freiburg in Breisgau, qualifying for a war pilot's licence. He then flew his own plane back to the front, and joined Loerzer at the base. Soon he had shot down two enemy planes.

It was on the Somme that he met with his first disaster. With two other 'scouts' he took off on a reconnaissance flight. It was in November; the sky was overcast and a thick mist obscured the ground. Suddenly he became aware that his comrades were scattering and that an English bombing plane had appeared. He attacked it at once, but almost immediately saw the reason for the disappearance of the rest of the patrol. A squadron of six English planes swooped down through the clouds and he felt a searing pain in his leg. He tried to get above them, but it was too late. There was a burst of machine-gun fire and the tank of his plane was ripped open. In the same second he felt a terrific blow in his side as his engine stalled. The plane fell into a spin: his last ammunition was gone: he fainted—but by a piece of incredible luck he

recovered about five hundred feet above the German lines. With consummate skill he succeeded in gliding down and made a precarious landing in a field. When he was lifted from the cockpit it was seen that he had fainted again, and although his leg wound was only slight, injuries to the hip and abdomen called for an instant operation.

For four months he remained in hospital from November 1915 to March, 1916 chafing under the cruel necessity of keeping quiet and recuperating. After his complete recovery it was decided that he should be sent to the Air Reserve Corps in Boeblingen. But Goering wanted to get back to the front, to his 'real work,' and he simply sent a wire to the authorities.

Was unable to find Boeblingen on map or in time table. Stop. Proceeding directly to front.'

Loerzer had meanwhile become C O of the 26th Pursuit Squadron. Goering rejoined him. Less than three months later he was appointed leader of the 27th Squadron, his first independent command.

#### IV

A YEAR later in June 1917, Goering and his squadron were fighting with the 4th German Army in Flanders. The objective was the Wytschaete ridge, and the struggle marks the beginning of the great English offensive which lasted well into the winter.

Here-Goering fought one of his most murderous air duels with an English flyer called Slee For almost an hour the machine guns barked the two planes attacked and counter attacked till Goering succeeded by a lucky shot in forcing his opponent down The plane crashed but the English aviator was thrown clear of the wreck and taken prisoner He was Goering's eighth victim

Almost every week brought him a fresh victory After his twentieth victory he received the decoration *Pour le Mérite* the highest decoration in the German army Up to the end of the war he had sixteen more victories to his credit making thirty six all told

Of course the danger and nervous tension left their marks on even his iron physique He had a short leave in 1916 during which he spent three days at Frankfurt with his friend and comrade Loerzer Food and drink were rare luxuries for those who daily risked their lives This man of strange contrasts spent every evening of his leave at the theatre Not with classic fare he preferred burlesque and the comedy being still young enough to enjoy broad *risqué* jokes or the lines of a trim figure

In June 1918 he was recalled to Berlin as a test pilot A new plane was to be tried out Goering took it into the air and found it quite satisfactory Half an hour later Captain Reinhard commander of the famous First Squadron since the death of Baron Manfred von Richthofen was sent up in the same plane At the height of three thousand feet a terrible thing happened the wings collapsed and Reinhard crashed to his death Hermann Goering's

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uncanny luck seemed to be holding even behind the lines.

A few days later First-Lieutenant Hermann Goering was appointed C.O. of the Richthofen Squadron; a difficult task, a heavy responsibility and yet a signal honour. German planes were hopelessly outnumbered by the superior output of the enemy. Some of the squadrons had to go up five times a day. Often their bases were within the radius of the enemy's artillery fire. These last months of the war raised the nervous tension and the demand for courage and energy to a fantastic pitch.

Then came the collapse and on the 9th November, 1918, Goering called together his pilots. He told them that they must stick together, even if the world should topple around them. Karl Bodenschatz, his A.D.C., is one of the few men who are at Goering's side even to-day. His diary furnishes a description of the events in Goering's life during the fateful last months of 1918.

On the 10th November, instructions arrived that the planes were to be taken to Darmstadt. An hour later the order was cancelled: the squadron must wait. Then came the final, stupendous news: the machines were to be delivered to the Americans.

Goering refused to obey. He commanded his squadron to fly in close formation to Darmstadt. But there was a thick fog above them which they could not penetrate. Bodenschatz was detailed to take the ground staff with the equipment to Darmstadt. The flyers waited impatiently for an improvement in the weather. All day long they stared at the sky, not leaving their machines

even for a moment. Goering had one desperate worry: if the fog did not lift until the 12th November, it would be impossible, according to the terms of the Armistice, to fly the machines to Darmstadt. At last, on the morning of the twelfth the sky cleared. At ten o'clock the squadron vanished towards the east.

Some of the planes lost their way and were forced to land at Mannheim where a military council was in command. They were arrested and their weapons were confiscated.

Goering, on receiving news of this, started out with the rest of his squadron towards Mannheim. As he circled above the town, he sent down an ultimatum, threatening the whole town with destruction unless his comrades were released with full honours and all their weapons returned to them. And there is no doubt that he would have fulfilled his threat. However, the military Council 'reconsidered' the matter and the squadron was permitted to fly on.

In the old inn of Aschaffenburg, Goering faced his comrades for the last time. It must have been a difficult and unhappy evening when they parted. Most of them had been living for the war; had not learned anything except the art of killing and the ways and means of keeping alive in the face of overwhelming odds. The new world around them, which was in a turmoil, had nothing to offer which they could accept. They had to start all over again.

For a few weeks Goering tried to find his bearings. We know of only one public action of his during



this time. A huge meeting of officers was convened in the Philharmonic Hall in Berlin. A new order to officers had been issued by the War Ministry. They were to wear their uniforms but instead of the insignia of rank they were to wear blue stripes on their arms. The purpose of the meeting was to protest against this order. These misguided men still regarded superficialities as more important than the rebuilding of their whole nation.

The new Minister for War, General Reinhold, was himself wearing the new blue stripes and in his speech he exhorted the officers to resign to the new order; he could not give the reasons for it but, he averred, they were many and well-founded. The officers of the German Imperial Army must stick to the new Government or else. . . .

Suddenly Goering jumped on to the platform and began to shout:

"Your Excellency!" he began. "I thought that you would be here to-night, but I had hoped to see a black band on your arm; a black band expressing your deep sadness at this thing you have planned against us. Instead of this you wear the blue stripes, they ought to be red, Your Excellency!"

It was an excited and dramatic outburst. The General vanished without replying, but Goering continued:

"On land, on the sea and in the air we officers have done our duty for four long years; we have risked life and limb for the Fatherland. Now we return home—and how are we treated? They spit at us and try to take away our honour. I tell-

you, it is *not* the people who are responsible for all this. Through four terrible years we have been the comrades of the people, whatever social class they came from. But there are those who have incited the people to revolt; who have stabbed our glorious army in the back and whose only desire is to rule and to get rich at the cost of the people. That is why I preach to you to-day the doctrine of hate, the deepest hate in the world against these criminals. The day will come—I know it and I implore you to believe me—when their little game will be finished and we shall chase them out of our Germany. Prepare for this day and work for it! It must come!”

It was an impassioned appeal; even if a rather vague one. Nobody knew much about the young aviator and Goering vanished from the hall. The same night he spent with his friends discussing the plans of the future. And assuredly the future looked black.

\* \* \* \* \*

Goering's official biographer is strangely reticent about the next three years of the unemployed officer's life. Even Mr. Ward Price, Goering's sincere admirer, says only that after the war he became a civilian air-pilot in Sweden, and there married Baroness Karin von Fock whom he met as a result of a forced landing.

The official biography has little more to tell. Behind the man who turned up in Munich in 1922 as a student—a student at the age of 29, there were three years of bitter struggles to earn a living,

three years of trying to find a niche in the world. But little is known of the details of these years. So much is certain that Goering went to Scandinavia after the collapse of the old régime in Germany. Here he became a 'worker,' earning his bread by hiring himself out as a pilot to different companies. He was his own mechanic, his own blacksmith, his own navigator. In order to buy a book or a small object of art (not that he hankered much after such things in those years) he had to work more than twelve hours a day. When flying did not prove sufficiently lucrative he opened a shop in which he sold parachutes and in this venture he had to experience disappointment and failure like any other shopkeeper. He had one friend who helped him, a friend who worked by night as a taxi driver. To-day this man is Goering's State Secretary.

## V

It was in the spring of 1922 that Hermann Goering returned from Sweden with his young wife. As a famous airman, holder of the *Pour le Mérite*, a decoration he shared with only seventy-one other German officers, he had no difficulty in creating a social position for himself in the Bavarian capital. This fact was later to be of especial importance, as he helped to introduce the activities of Hitler's Party into a new social stratum.

At first he lived with Karin von Fock in

Hochkreuth near Bayrischzell where they had established a modest home in a small hunting lodge. Later—Goering's first wife had a comfortable fortune—they occupied an elegant house in the garden suburb of Gern. Some of their acquaintances considered them to be an exotic pair: there was certainly something highly unconventional about their parties, but then in those hectic years almost everything was unconventional in Germany.

Goering came to Munich to study at the university, but there is no record of his having passed any examinations. The more probable explanation of his return is that he considered the time ripe for taking an active part in the chaotic political life of his country and so hastened to seize opportunity by the forelock.

Civil war, political strife was rife in Germany. Unemployment and poverty increased day by day. The menacing spectre of inflation made the Mark plunge to incredible depths. Even those who had work performed it with dull lethargy.

Munich was also in a state of turmoil. When some of the extremists in the Western countries demanded the extradition of German generals to punish them for not winning the war, protest meetings were held all over Germany.

In October 1922 Goering went to Munich to attend such a meeting. It was on the Koenigsplatz that he saw Hitler for the first time. They had not met yet. Goering listened only half heartedly to the bombastic speeches. But on the same day he heard about Hitler and about the more or less unimportant German Workers Party, Roehm's Iron Fist.

did not attract him, there was too much dubious scum surrounding the strange leader they were not 'gentlemen' according to Goering's code but strangely enough he found a former house painter and corporal gentleman enough to be accepted as his *Tuehrer* even though this acceptance was far from spontaneous.

On the 12th October Goering met Hitler for the first time. The two men appraised each other critically. One came of a fairly old military and professional family the other was the son of an illegitimate father. Goering had—except for a very short time—always led a sheltered life a financially safe existence. Hitler had clung precariously to his 'artistic' career peddling his incredibly bad post-cards in Vienna. Both were of the choleric easily excitable type. But there were too many discrepancies in their characters too many differences in their pasts to make the development of their association quick and smooth.

When Goering asked Hitler why he had not spoken at the protest meeting Hitler rather unctuously replied that he had not wanted to disturb this middle-class gathering his words said he would have marred their unity.

It isn't the question of generals said he it is the question of the whole of Germany. Those who stood in the square are just as patently stupid as the Red Government is guilty in letting things come to such a pass.

Hitler probably held the rather crazy conviction that his speech would have provoked a revolution!

Next day he spoke at the meeting of the German

Workers' Party. Goering was present with his young wife. Only a handful of people attended and the aristocratic commander of the Richthofen Squadron must have felt rather ill-at-ease in the company of Drexler, Koerner and Berchtold. Was it prophetic vision which made him stick to this insignificant party, to these ill-assorted people? Perhaps it was Adolf Hitler's indubitable power as an orator which fascinated twenty-nine-year-old Goering, and made him grasp the hand of his wife in an almost painful grip.

Then he returned to the mountain hunting lodge and discussed his plans with Karin. He certainly saw a great many possibilities in Hitler's embryo party. Hitler was an orator, but he needed, an organiser; someone who could create order among the masses he had fascinated by his fanatic speeches; someone who could create the nucleus of some corps, army or bodyguard so that those who were still wavering could be herded by force into the fold of the only political faith which could save Germany.

The next day he offered his services to Adolf Hitler.

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November, 1922, brought decisive steps into the history of the Nazi movement.

In the same year Mussolini established his dictatorship in Italy. It made a stupendous impression on the German middle-class world; they discovered for the first time that such a thing was really possible. Hermann Esser proclaimed in

the Krone Circus at Munich that the German Mussolini had already been found in Adolf Hitler. But Dietrich Eckart was still trying to hold back the German Workers' Party from extreme steps; even Goering was a little doubtful, and Hitler himself was—at least outwardly—submissive to Ludendorff who had joined the movement some months earlier.

It was during these days that Hitler appointed Goering to the command of the Storm Troops. The Field-Marshal's official biographer claims in skilfully worded sentences that Goering had created the Storm Troops. This is not quite the truth. When Goering arrived in Munich, the Storm Troops had already been formed and were the source of constant friction between Hitler and Roehm.

Hitler had learnt during his political campaigning that speeches were not enough to endow a meeting with life and action. There must be an impetus and a fixed goal.

So he organised a band of men who were scattered about the hall. It was their duty to give the signal for applause; they led the singing; they formed a gangway for the Fuehrer; if there was any interruption, they overpowered the heckler. Slowly they learned to do all this at the word of command. They were proud of their Party, their speaker, their Fuehrer; they felt superior to the ordinary visitors at a meeting; and so they applauded spontaneously, and this applause infected the rest of the audience.

After the meetings there were often processions where the little gangs sang anti-Semitic songs and then scattered, trying to pick quarrels with political

opponents, glorying in brawls and in man-handling Jews—or even Jewish looking men and women. Once they seized the consul of a large South American republic and he had to prove his 'gentility' before he was set free.

Slowly from these little bands emerged the S A, the Storm Troops. Over their purpose and use Hitler and Roehm came to grips. Roehm had collected and hidden weapons and he regarded the Storm Troops as the men to bear his weapons. When the Inhabitants' Defence League (*Einwohnerwehr*), which was called *Orgesch* from its leader, Escherich, the Bavarian Commissioner of woods and forests, was dissolved, when Lieutenant Ehrhardt, instigator of the abortive Kapp *Putsch* had fled to Bavaria, his officers were unemployed, and all this material was available for Roehm to build up the S A on his own plan.

But Hitler had no desire to permit officers to transform his Storm Troops into a secret Reichswehr. He quarrelled with Roehm, not only on this account but also because Roehm introduced into the Party a number of political murderers. The senior commander of the S A, a Lieutenant Klitzsch had been arrested in connection with the murder of the distinguished minister, Rathenau, and although Hitler gave a party in his honour after his release, he must have felt distinctly uneasy in the company of such assassins.

However, when the 'Ruhr War' had broken out in January, 1923 the Reichswehr wanted to throw the S A into the fight against the external enemy, and so Hitler was compelled to resign the Storm



Troops to Roehm. When Goering, a man with a brilliant military reputation, on whom Hitler set great store, was made its leader, there was still the danger that the S.A. might slip from Hitler's hands. After all, in the course of 1922, Roehm had raised the strength of the Bavarian Storm Troops to a force of ten thousand perfectly drilled men.

Goering had taken over the S.A. soon after his meeting with the Fuehrer. He moved to Obermenzing, and threw himself, body and soul, into his new task. His life was divided between political meetings and the parade grounds of the S.A. Rifles, machine-guns, lorries were gathered, if necessary requisitioned, and the Storm Troops grew to be a formidable army.

## VI

CAPTAIN GOERING was constantly on the move. By the beginning of 1923, he felt that he had accomplished most of his work. Although Roehm was the virtual leader of the S.A., Goering had succeeded in drilling them more in accordance with the political aims of Hitler than with the reckless, foolhardy ends set up by Roehm and his officers. On the 28th January, 1923, Hitler inspected the S.A. and presented a number of new colours. Goering stood at their head, proudly reviewing the handiwork over which he had now perfect control.

In the little villa at Obermenzing there were

continuous conferences. Goering's guests included Hitler, Dietrich, Eckhardt, Amann (who later became the publisher of Nazi literature), Hess, Esser and Rosenberg. The Goering home became, in fact, the centre of the party's political activity, while Roehm and his companions worked on the military side.

Then in March, 1923, the French crossed the Rhine and the Ruhr was occupied by them. The German Government tried passive resistance, but in vain. Civil war again threatened Germany, but in Bavaria the Reichswehr was still master of the situation. General von Lossow took the oath from his troops, and South and North Germany were divided by an ever widening gap.

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At that time Hitler saw great opportunities for his Party. There were three men whose co-operation he had to win in order to start a military revolution against the Social-Democrat Government of Berlin.

The first of these was Gustav von Kahr, President of the Bavarian Provincial Administration. The second was General von Lossow, the man who commanded the Reichswehr Division in Bavaria; while the third was Colonel von Seisser, head of the Bavarian police.

Lossow asked Hitler whether he thought that the generals of Prussia would make common cause with them in the event of their starting a revolution. Hitler replied that they must put Ludendorff in command; the Reichswehr, he said, would follow him blindly. But surely not the responsible

Hitler, he said, "would be found a place somewhere in the Government." So Goering himself was doubtful how the orator of the people could be employed once the Nazi Party had seized the power. So Goering had no real idea of the age he was living in. Hitler did not bother to ask him or Ludendorff or any of his associates what part they expected him to play. When the time came, he simply confronted them with his decision which they could either accept or refuse. He did not trouble to draw the well-known Ludendorff or young Goering into his councils ; he employed both of them as executive organs.

Ludendorff who showed an incredible political naïveté (this was proved subsequently by his violent crusade against Christianity and the half-baked theories of a new German religion) was more or less willing ; Goering followed Hitler's lead against his will.

On 23rd October, Goering gave orders to his henchmen which certainly set a black mark against his name and render subsequent atrocity stories credible. According to the testimony of witnesses before the examining magistrate, he said, with regard to the proposed action :

"Anyone who makes the least difficulty is to be shot. It is necessary that the leaders should find out, here and now, the personalities who must be removed. One at least must be shot as a warning immediately after the revolution."

The training to kill, the grim school of war had left their traces in the frame of mind, in the thoughts and actions of Captain Goering. He could not rid

Feldherrnhalle and the Residenz. Here there was a thin cordon of police. Both parties hesitated. Then more police appeared at the end of the street. Behind them there was an armoured car mounting a machine-gun.

Ulrich Graf, Hitler's close friend, sprang forwards and shouted :

"Will you fire at His Excellency Ludendorff?" Then he collapsed.

Hitler strode between Ludendorff and Scheubner-Richter. He held a pistol in his right hand and shouted to the police officer : "Surrender!"

Another man—some people believe it was Streicher—sprang in front of the procession from the group round Hitler, went up to the police officer and had a brief conversation with him. At this moment a shot was fired. It was a pistol or revolver shot and as the police had carbines, it must have come from the National Socialist ranks. But there is no absolute certainty as to who fired the first shot in that fateful battle.

In the next second, volleys thundered out on both sides. The first man to fall fatally wounded, was Scheubner-Richter; in collapsing he dislocated Hitler's arm so that the latter fell with him and remained on the ground. Without exception they threw themselves down—including even Ludendorff. But he did not turn and flee. He rose and walked erect together with Major Streck between the gun-barrels on to the Odeonplatz where he was arrested. Nobody followed him.

Fourteen dead lay on the pavement; among them Oskar Koerner, the former second Chairman

the Party; Supreme-Court Councillor von der Pfordten and von Scheubner-Richter.

Goering was severely wounded by machine-gun bullets. He rolled for cover behind one of the bronze lions in front of the palace on the side of the Odeon Square.

There he lay, bleeding, while his Fuehrer got up, ran back and drove away. Hundreds of their comrades were still on the ground. The battle was not decided, yet the Fuehrer was the first to abandon the field and to give the signal for flight.

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Some friends managed to drag Goering to cover then and took him home. His wife, who was herself very ill, sat at his bedside, shivering with fever. For two days Goering lay half-conscious, hovering on the edge of death. Only his iron constitution saved him.

In great pain, owing to the dislocation of his shoulder-joint, Hitler drove out of the city. He drove to Uffing on the Staffelsee, a distance of about forty miles where his friends, the Hanfstaengls lived in a villa. Frau Hanfstaengl and her daughter Erna nursed him.

Two days later he was arrested.

This news came to the Goerings, together with the disconcerting knowledge that a warrant had been issued against Hermann. There was no other course open except flight. He must escape, even if ill and only half-conscious.

A car appeared and Goering was carried down to it. They raced towards the Austrian border.

himself of them, even had he wanted to do so. And this determination and ruthlessness were just what Hitler needed in the leader of his S A.

But for a man like Kahr it was far too violent. On 6th November, he gathered the leaders of his Defence Associations and delivered a speech forbidding any *Putsch* except that which he himself was preparing. Lossow himself was also shaken in his purpose. He cried in despair:

I want to march. Good heavens, I want to march but only if I have a fifty-one per cent probability of success.

\* \* \* \* \*

But Hitler did not want to give up his bid for power so easily. Kahr's prohibition of any rival *coup d'état* did not intimidate him. He knew that Kahr and von Lossow would address a large meeting on 8th November. He decided to call their bluff and force them into declaring a rising against the Berlin Government—a rising in which he would play the leading part.

\* \* \* \* \*

The morning of the 9th November, 1923, dawned. Five years previously the Armistice had been signed. The Armistice which was followed by the Treaty of Versailles, civil war, internal strife, inflation and incredible poverty. Five years of chaos culminating in that grey November morning.

A few hours were spent in putting the bank of the Isar, the peaceful river of Munich in a state of defence. A few guns were brought up. Towards

eleven, Hitler and Ludendorff started on their 'reconnaissance march' with several thousand men. They carried guns over their shoulders, in some cases with fixed bayonets; behind the first ranks came a motor-lorry loaded with machine-guns. It was a demonstration, but they were also well prepared for a battle.

The procession was headed by Hitler, Ludendorff, the Russo-German Scheubner-Richter and some others; Goering was in the second rank.

At the Isar bridge they encountered the cordons of the State police.

Goering stepped forward, saluted and said:

"The first man dead or wounded on our side means the shooting of all hostages whom we have in our hands."

There was no reply. He repeated:

"As soon as the first men over there are lying on the pavement, all the hostages we hold will be shot."

The police did not shoot. The next moment they were disarmed, handled rather roughly and hurried from the scene.

The procession continued its way through the inner city. On the Marienplatz a great crowd of people had collected. In the centre from a raised platform Julius Streicher who had immediately journeyed from Nuremberg to Munich, was delivering a speech. As soon as he saw the procession, he descended from the platform and took his place immediately behind Hitler and Ludendorff.

They advanced through the narrow Residenzstrasse to the point where this street reaches the broad Odeonplatz between the huge pile of the

Feldherrnhalle and the Residenz Here there was a thin cordon of police Both parties hesitated Then more police appeared at the end of the street Behind them there was an armoured car mounting a machine gun

Ulrich Graf Hitler's close friend sprang forwards and shouted

Will you fire at His Excellency Ludendorff? Then he collapsed

Hitler strode between Ludendorff and Scheubner Richter He held a pistol in his right hand and shouted to the police officer 'Surrender!'

Another man—some people believe it was Streicher—sprang in front of the procession from the group round Hitler went up to the police officer and had a brief conversation with him At this moment a shot was fired It was a pistol or revolver shot and as the police had carbines it must have come from the National Socialist ranks But there is no absolute certainty as to who fired the first shot in that fateful battle



the Party; Supreme-Court Councillor von der Pfordten and von Scheubner-Richter.

Goering was severely wounded by machine-gun bullets. He rolled for cover behind one of the bronze lions in front of the palace on the side of the Odeon Square.

There he lay, bleeding, while his Fuehrer got up, ran back and drove away. Hundreds of their comrades were still on the ground. The battle was not decided, yet the Fuehrer was the first to abandon the field and to give the signal for flight.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some friends managed to drag Goering to cover then and took him home. His wife, who was herself very ill, sat at his bedside, shivering with fever. For two days Goering lay half-conscious, hovering on the edge of death. Only his iron constitution saved him.

In great pain, owing to the dislocation of his shoulder-joint, Hitler drove out of the city. He drove to Uffing on the Staffelsee, a distance of about forty miles where his friends, the Hanfstaengls lived in a villa. Frau Hanfstaengl and her daughter Erna nursed him.

Two days later he was arrested.

This news came to the Goerings, together with the disconcerting knowledge that a warrant had been issued against Hermann. There was no other course open except flight. He must escape, even if ill and only half-conscious.

A car appeared and Goering was carried down to it. They raced towards the Austrian border.

But the news of the abortive *Putsch* had spread everywhere. Kahr and his associates wanted to make sure that none of the leaders should escape. The frontier guard had been furnished with a detailed description of them all. Hermann Goering was arrested. Under an armed police escort he was taken to Garmisch Partenkirchen. But these 'reactionaries' were humane. Instead of imprisoning him in a cell, they took him to a sanatorium.

His wife and friends had escaped arrest. They remained at work and in a few hours mysterious men began to arrive at the sanatorium. Karin was with them and they carried Goering to a waiting car. Well covered with furs and rugs they succeeded in passing the frontier guards, this time unmolested. Was it bribery or the same forces which made Adolf Hitler's prison such a pleasant place?—that we shall probably never know.

Hermann Goering was taken to the hospital of Innsbruck. There he was operated on and had a difficult time in the hands of the surgeons. Even after he was well on the way to recovery, he had one relapse after another. His wounds were not healing as they should, there was a restlessness in him which strongly influenced his physical condition. He had built on sand and the castle collapsed. Once again he was an outcast from his country, but this time it was not a self imposed exile. He could not return to Germany of his own free will as he did in 1922. He was almost penniless—all his belongings had been confiscated and of course the dissolved Party was unable to supply him with funds—and had very little in the way of prospects.

It was the nadir of his career and he resented it bitterly. Barely thirty, he could not endure the thought of being a failure.

His only solace was the sympathy which the right wing parties in Austria felt for the Nazis. Hitler's sister visited him and there were daily messages from nearby Munich.

Never was the future so black as during these weeks in Innsbruck. Hitler was in prison, awaiting his trial. The movement was without a leader. When Hitler arrived at the fortress of Landsberg on the Lech his left arm was in a sling and he was utterly exhausted. Hardly able to speak, he had to be undressed by the warden. Outside a strong armed guard was ready; they feared an armed attempt to liberate the prisoner.

While Goering lay in the sanatorium at Garmisch, Hitler wanted to start a hunger-strike. He confided his intention to Anton Drexler who shared his imprisonment, although he was completely innocent in the *Putsch*. Drexler protested; he said that the Nazi Movement needed a leader and not a martyr. Hitler did not need much persuading; he abandoned the plan and nothing more was said about it.

His spirits revived when he heard that there would be a public trial. What a splendid opportunity for propaganda! He would not stand as an accused; he would charge Kahr, Lossow and Seisser with sedition and treason.

Hermann Goering could have no part in all this. But watching the events in the safe distance of Innsbruck, a complete change in his character occurred. He knew that the movement to which he

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had pledged himself could not be built on old foundations he knew that his class could not play a leading part in the success of such a Party, he realised at last that his Fuehrer was of a different world. Perhaps he was ready to renounce his own world, his own class, perhaps in those weeks a new kind of defiance was born in him.

On Christmas Day he was discharged from hospital. He moved to the 'Tiroler Hof' where the Austrian Nazis, to whom he was unquestionably a hero, decorated his room with evergreens and staged a small celebration. Goering was restless and nervous. He had—at least according to his official biographer—proposed to Hitler that he should return to Bavaria and face the trial. If he did, in fact, make this offer, it was not simply in a spirit of self sacrifice. No doubt he desired for himself a share in the publicity which his associates would be getting. But Hitler knew that he would have to share the stage with Ludendorff, Poehner, Frick, Roehm, Kriebel, Robert Wagner (later Reich Governor of Baden) and Perult, Ludendorff's stepson—so he replied to Goering that he should stay at Innsbruck and 'carry on'.

On New Year's Eve, Hitler's envoy arrived and Goering felt a little disappointed. He wanted to 'carry on' but he did not know where and how. With longing and defiance he looked towards the mountains separating Austria from Germany. Three long years had to pass before he could cross them once again.

## VII

IN February 1924 Goering went to Vienna to hold some conversations with the leaders of Austrian Nazis. These conferences proved to be more or less sterile: the failure of the November *Putsch* had discouraged the Austrian comrades who were always a little sceptical of Hitler's methods. But Goering was defiantly hopeful: in a letter to Karin's mother, he wrote rather bombastically

Truth must reach the light. The traitors shall be vanquished by their own treachery. Their fall will be final while we begin to rise with renewed strength in the immutable belief in our final victory in the justice and holiness of our cause. The events which at first seemed to be our doom have been proved at the source of new power and perhaps we had to endure this trial to become steeled against all tribulations. I shall never return to this Jewish Republic only to a National Socialist Germany. I shall always be ready to fight for the liberty of my Fatherland.

Well, he did in fact return to this Jewish Republic but then most great men of to-day would find it unpleasant to have their letters or speeches quoted at a later date

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In the meantime Hitler's trial was going on. There were a hundred newspaper reporters from all parts of the globe. There were the judges who behaved in a rather strange way: the eight prisoners

and their eleven lawyers were able to accuse, slander and bully Kahr, Lossow and Seisser as if the positions were reversed.

Of course Goering was following the trial with keen interest. He had hoped that Hitler and the others would be acquitted and that the acquittal would be followed by a general amnesty. Yet he was very little surprised when, on the 1st April, 1924, Hitler was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in a fortress. Poehner, Weber and Kriebel received the same sentence; Roehm, Frick and Brueckner only fifteen months.

Karin Goering writes to her mother: "The whole thing is so stupid that no sensible human being can understand it."

Certainly it was difficult to understand. Five years in prison would have meant the end of Hitler's movement. Without his personal activity it would have dwindled again to those half-witted artisans' meetings in the back-rooms of taverns. But there were powerful allies who took good care that it should not be so. The presiding judge himself said that Hitler would be pardoned—not that there was any legal ground for such a procedure, but the sentence itself provided for a probation after six months.

Meanwhile Goering was chafing under the difficulties of his exile. He had had hopes of an amnesty, but no amnesty was forthcoming—while Bavaria was willing to set Hitler on a probation, she did not consider the time ripe yet for allowing the firebrands to return. The Austrian Nazis had very little money; their movement was without any material backing. Therefore Goering's financial position also



deteriorated until finally, ruin stared him in the face. Nor was the provincial government of Tyrol especially pleased with the presence of such dangerous conspirators. There was much talk of extradition and Goering felt that he had to move on. Another consideration was the health of his wife. Karin had been ill when the fateful shots rang out in front of the Feldherrnhalle, the subsequent excitement and nervous tension did not help her to recover fully. She had to be moved to a warmer climate and Goering decided to go to Italy.

He had succeeded in creating a connection between Mussolini and the sadly depleted ranks of his Party. After his release Hitler sent a personal message to Mussolini; later he declared to Munder, leader of the Wuerttemberg district: "Mussolini invited me to go and see him."

"Then I should go at once," replied Munder.

"I can't," said Hitler with some regret in his voice. "I am the leader of the German movement which, to our country, is what Fascism is to Italy. I must confront Mussolini as an equal, and for that I need, for instance, at least three motor-cars. These I cannot at present afford."

A not very plausible excuse; the lack of motor-cars probably hid a certain lack of warmth on Mussolini's part in receiving the, as yet, unrecognised German leader. But Goering spared no effort, because he recognised the importance of such a contact and the later *approchement* between the two Dictators was certainly, to a large extent, due to his work during 1924.

In 1925 Goering returned to Sweden after visiting Austria, Czechoslovakia Poland and Danzig

He was more impatient than ever Anxiety and financial cares began to undermine his mental stamina and often he was on the verge of despair He had spent most of Karin's money and her mother was unable to help them He had to pawn most of his possessions and finally even their house and furniture had to be auctioned off to pay the creditors at least in part These years were full of bitter humiliation and were best forgotten

Of course Goering was following the events in the life of the movement, even during the period of his personal distress

At last in the autumn of 1926 there was a general amnesty for political offenders in deference to the wish of old Paul von Hindenburg This opened the way for Goering and he returned to a changed Germany in which Hitler was still struggling for power in his own party and success for National Socialism seemed to be very distant

## VIII

GOERING'S first visit was to Munich where he again met Adolf Hitler The Fuehrer was genuinely glad to see his trusted lieutenant again not so much for personal reasons as because he had high hopes of Goering's prestige and social standing Nor was he able to offer any help in financial matters—

although he was still comfortably living in Haus Wachenfeld, he did not seem to regard Goering's material position seriously. He was to help himself as best he could—and Goering, hiding his disappointment, appealed to his friends. He formed connections with the Aircraft-Motors Industry, with the firm of Heinkel and with the Bavarian Motor Works. It was not a very assured living and Goering had to wait until 1928 for a certain measure of financial safety.

The period from the autumn of 1926 to May, 1928, was one of waiting and irritating procrastination. His business activities were not always successful, and the progress of the Party extremely slow.

\* \* \* \* \*

At last 1928 arrived; elections were held and the National-Socialists got twelve seats in the Reichstag. Goering was one of the new members, and his financial difficulties seemed to be over for he received a monthly salary of 600 marks.

He moved to Berlin where he lived in great style; his salary was hardly adequate for his expenditures, and he became heavily in debt. Soon he met Goebbels and an intimate friendship sprang up between them. Together they worked systematically for the overthrow of Gregor Strasser and his adherents; and from this time on, Goering proved an extremely valuable helper to Hitler in his fight for the absolute leadership of the Party.

After the great electoral defeat of 1928, which

brought Goering his seat but reduced the number of the National Socialist mandates Hitler had begun a strong campaign for supreme power

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The parliamentary fraction of which Goering was a member had received seats in the last row of the Reichstag. As Hitler had commanded them to follow legal paths instead of such revolutionary methods as the Munich *Putsch* his deputies tried to do their best. Not that they could do much. They had no place in the committees and spoke but seldom.

Goering delivered one of his first speeches on the 22nd February 1929. The Reichsbahn the German State Railways were in desperate straits. The international creditors had seized control as a surety for the Dawes Loan. A severe curtailing of the staff necessitated a certain neglect of some of the lines.

Goering launched a violent attack against the foreign creditors and the burden of reparations.

The reason for these unbearable conditions is solely the misuse of the German Reichsbahn by the Dawes Plan and the reparations. All political parties have to acknowledge this. All parties are guilty for making it possible for us to come to such a pass. This is the essence of the matter. The German State Railways formerly the pride of the Reich perhaps the best in the world serving only the people and their economic life have become the subject of misuse and usury by our opponents. My Party has recognised the consequences of such a

course right from the beginning. As soon as we come to power, we shall give the free Reichsbahn back to the free German people ! ”

A most impressive speech, but nobody paid any attention to it. Very few deputies dreamt of the time when the Nazis would play an important part in the Reichstag.

In March 1929, Hitler said to the Reichswehr “with your help I could conquer, but he could not have meant it seriously. The Party had only eight-hundred thousand electors and although Goebbels who had that year become Director of Propaganda, tried to do everything to popularise its programme and Fuehrer his endeavours as yet, showed little results.

On the 14th June, Goering again rose in the Reichstag. Only half the members were present. There was very little interest in any speech by a member of an insignificant party. The subject of the debate was the budget for the current year, the actual question the problem of the German Air Lines.

On this subject Goering felt himself competent enough to speak. As a war pilot, as a man of considerable experience in commercial aviation, he was sincere in his wish to further the development of German Air Lines. At the same time he may have felt that his place would be at the head of any new organisation appointed to deal with these problems.

‘Why hasn’t aviation a special Secretary of State?’ he asked and already visualised himself in the position. ‘Why are you trying to economise

on this point when national duty demands the contrary? Why are the members of this House and the aviation committee content to follow anonymous memoranda which only serve to destroy confidence in German aviation? We aviators have always fought openly and we would do so again. I hope that you will be prepared to follow this method.'

He then went on to describe the position of civil aviation, Germany could not have any military planes at the moment. It was no doubt, a rather grim picture and his audience became more attentive.

'If you won't give aviation the necessary means now,' he concluded, 'sooner or later you shall be forced to do so.'

'You are an optimist!' shouted a Left-Wing deputy.

Optimism replied Goering "was always the prerogative of flyers. Save aviation! If you don't, you'll rue it bitterly in the future!"

His motion was rejected. A further sum of three million marks was taken from the aviation budget. Goering gnashed his teeth. He was as far from success as he had been three years previously, when he returned to Germany.

## IX

IN October, 1929 the death occurred of Gustav Stresemann Reich Foreign Minister and one of the greatest German politicians. A little earlier the



THICK CROWD OF REFUGEES IN TOWN HALL AT COLOGNE. THE CROWD IS TYPICAL OF THE SITUATION IN GERMAN TOWNS.

foreign creditors of Germany gathered under the presidency of Owen D Young, at Paris, and drafted a new plan for German payments. This was a definite programme of dates and figures, but it fixed the amounts intolerably high. The delegate of German industry withdrew from the conference. Only Dr Hjalmar Schacht, President of the Reichsbank, defended it, and on his advice the Government accepted and Hindenburg signed it.

German industry wanted to fight the plan. And here, from 1930 onward, Hitler came into close touch with high finance. Here also began his financial dependence on political middlemen and even rivals. Hugenberg controlled the Press, the funds and the whole propaganda machine—but he did not control the people.

Adolf Hitler had an intimate friend, a political financier, Dr Bang. Bang was a confidant of Hugenberg but at the same time he often met Hitler and was a contributor to the *Voelkischer Beobachter*. It was Bang who brought Hugenberg and Hitler together. They formed an alliance which enabled Hitler to obtain huge sums from the Hugenberg coffers, at the same time he pledged himself to co-operate in the attacks on the Young plan. The industrialists began to recognise that Hitler was the greatest agitator in Germany and at the same time the only person who could control the sudden fierce revolt of the Right Wing. So the campaign went on, ending with a plebiscite, the plebiscite prepared by Hugenberg and Co. This plebiscite brought a crushing defeat—the majority of German people were in favour of the Young



Plan—but it was Hugenberg's failure and not Hitler's. Hitler knew that he had six million votes—and of these six million, three had been Hugenberg's a year ago.

In February 1931, Goering received a visitor in the Reichstag building. He was Major Tryggve Gran, a Norwegian aviator who had fought in the war on the side of the English. Goering had met him in battle several times and thought it a chivalrous gesture to grant the old enemy an interview. They had a long talk and Goering parted from Major Tryggve Gran with the optimistic words:

To day, we have laid the foundation stone of the new Germany.

If it was indeed the foundation stone, a considerable time elapsed before the walls began to rise. Roehm was still working on the reorganisation of the SA. While Goebbels incited the Berlin SA leaders against the homosexuals, Goering remained in the background. Then came the Stennes revolt. Stennes was the supreme SA leader for the whole East of Germany. He mutinied openly on the 7th April 1931. It was Roehm who had befriended Stennes; therefore he could not be trusted to suppress the revolt, so Hitler gave full power to Goering to restore order. Goering fulfilled his orders ruthlessly. Officers were attacked and the

most loyal adherents flogged each other. The battle lasted three days, but at the end of that time Goering was able to report to Hitler that he had finished his task.

Stennes was expelled from the Party. Now was the time to get rid of his chief and protector, but Hitler clung to Roehm. He knew that he had to sacrifice a few favourites, but he also could thrust aside Goering who already wanted to gather the reins of the S A into his hands as a commissioner.

But Roehm succeeded in securing for Heines the place which Goering had wanted for himself. Goebbels, Goering's 'devoted friend,' now deserted him, just as easily as he had deserted Gregor Strasser in 1926. He preferred to side with Roehm who had an unassailable position in the favour of the Fuehrer.

In April, 1931, Roehm's enemies within the Party supplied the opposition Press with lurid tales about his private life. But this did not deter Hitler. He issued a decree forbidding complaints about the private lives of his comrades, and he said that the S A did not consist of young ladies; he wanted 'rough fighters' for the glorious arms of National Socialism.

When he saw that Goebbels was following Hitler's lead, Goering resigned. He did not join the Party opposition but did not take part in the fight of Goebbels and Roehm against Strasser and First Lieutenant Schulz who had been condemned for political murder, pardoned and had now been given office by Hitler in the Reich Party administration. Schulz organised the development of the civilian

Party but he had also designs on the S A His dispute with Roehm was only over methods in organisation Roehm trained an army adapted for civil war in spite of Hitler's protests The dissension between political and military leadership remained even if the quarrel was externally patched up for Hitler could not dispose of Roehm who gave him 600 000 men for an army!

Notwithstanding Goering's resignation as commissioner of the S A he still remained a member of the Reichstag Party and Hitler's deputy

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Meanwhile there was the Reichstag where Goering tried to voice his opinions about aviation problems He explained that the development of engines was far behind that of other countries although Germany had the best mechanical engineers The salaries of pilots were scandalously low The moral acknowledgment of their calling their social prestige was unsatisfactory Germany only spent 43 million marks for aviation in 1931 At the same time the French budget provided for 362 millions the British for 357 millions Goering tried to have the subsidy of motor construction increased by 1 500 000 marks But he had no luck with his motion

Leaders of the Lufthansa of aviation industry and inventive work visited the former Air Force Captain to ask for his help But now he refused

Wait till we have the power he told them optimistically We cannot hope for anything from the present Reichstag

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Roehm had done everything to persuade his leader away from the leaders of finance, from Hugenberg and Kirdorf, from Dietrich and Schacht alike. But in order to succeed he had to offer him something else. So he restored him to his old connection with the Reichswehr Ministry and renewed acquaintance with an old comrade who was now omnipotent adviser and ruler of the Minister: General von Schleicher. Schleicher had great influence with Hindenburg and at Roehm's request he advised the Reich President to give Hitler an audience—if possible secretly and without any publicity. Thus Hitler was invited to the palace.

He felt that he could not face Hindenburg alone, and when the invitation was fixed he notified the man with whom he had discussed all political questions in the last years: Hermann Goering.

Goering was in Stockholm. His mother-in-law, the Baroness Fock, died on the 25th September, 1931. Karin, who had loved her mother dearly, herself collapsed. She was dangerously ill and Goering was at her bedside. But when he heard about the proposed meeting, he rushed to Berlin. Nobody could tell, why. The official biographer affirms that he thought his duty to the movement more important than his private affairs; but whether he was present at the interview or not, it did not change the attitude of Hindenburg or that of Hitler in the smallest detail. The more likely explanation is that he could not bear the thought of his rival Roehm accompanying the Fuehrer to that first momentous interview. Whatever the motive, he arrived in Berlin and never again saw

his wife alive Karin Goering died on the 17th October, twenty-two days after her mother

As for the interview, there was only a short official communiqué stating that the Reich President had received Herr Adolf Hitler and the Reichstag Deputy Captain (retired) Goering, to receive a detailed report about the aims of the National-Socialist movement It was followed by a discussion of problems concerning home and foreign policy

advocate the extension of this term, while Bruening would return as soon as the question of reparations was settled. Hitler accepted the proposal in a letter which Bruening did not make public.

Goering and Goebbels violently reproached the Fuehrer. This compromise would give Bruening a strengthened position, earn him Hindenburg's gratitude and create internal peace for a long time. So strong was Goering's pleading, so pressing were Goebbels' demands that Hitler recanted. He could not wholly renounce his agreement, but he asked Bruening to resign immediately. Bruening refused. Seeing that he could not work with Hitler, he turned against him. Hindenburg was told that the 'Bohemian corporal' was trying to blackmail him by such a demand; and so he decided to fight it out.

The first election brought an overwhelming defeat. Hitler received eleven million votes against the eighteen million of Hindenburg: Goebbels was desperate. Hitler was at Munich; he rang him up there and asked him whether they should not give up the fight against the Reich's President and concentrate on the next parliamentary election? But Hitler told Otto Dietrich who was with him: "The attack must be immediately resumed with the utmost vigour. The National-Socialist who has recognised his opponents does not desist from his attack on them until their final overthrow. I appeal to you to embark immediately on the struggle for the second election. The first electoral contest is ended; the second has begun this very day. I for my part shall wage it too."

had hopes of becoming the absolute leader of the S.A. and did not want to see these hopes frustrated.

The ban on the S.A. is the moral disarmament of the will to freedom by the Government! he roared. Never has the people's right to live been represented so strongly as by this movement and its fighters. The S.A. has never been a military association the Government must know it. The ban on the S.A. is motivated by reasons of home policy. The explanation proffered says that the S.A. and the S.S. are military organisations. I ask the Reich Chancellor is it true that the German Ambassador in Paris has demanded the ban of the S.A. in urgent cables as absolute necessity for the discussions about disarmament and similar questions? Mr Reich Chancellor! In the foreign Press you always voice your demand that Germany must get certain concessions to prevent the National Socialist movement growing stronger and stronger. It would be much more reasonable to choose the opposite method to emphasise the strong national will in our movement to prove before the rest of the world that this movement demands the introduction of a new foreign policy representing the opinion of the whole German people. The ban on the S.A. is a demonstration against our national self respect and against the upholding of our right to live!

The long harangue was interrupted by cat-calls from the Left and Centre. They accused Goering and his Party of betraying the workers! Goering retorted

You are the traitors! Your speciality has always been high treason!

Tumult broke out and the Speaker had a hard task to restore order. But Goering was used to noise and his nerves were certainly stronger than those of his opponents who were not even quite sure of themselves.

Mr Minister Groener! he continued don't think for a moment that if you take the brown shirt from the members of the S A you have taken away their spirit! There are other parties changing their convictions as often as their shirts but our spirit and conviction remains the same in the face of terror and dissolution. Therefore it is self evident that we have to express our mistrust of this whole cabinet to day. A Government which has lost every battle both in home and foreign policy not to mention economics cannot command confidence. It has always been the same throughout history if a general loses a battle he must resign. The troops are not here to bleed for an inefficient commander nor are the people willing to perish for governments unable to master a situation. The German people demand new men at the helm! The Bruening Cabinet must vanish! It must step aside so that Germany may live!

It was certainly not Goering's speech which led to the resignation of Groener.

The fall of Bruening and Groener was engineered by Schleicher and Papen who smuggled some material into Hindenburg's hands regarding the Black Red Yellow *Reichsbanner* this material seemed to prove that it was as strongly armed as the S A although it upheld the Constitution.



Hindenburg saw no difference between the two and wanted to dissolve it just like the S.A. Groener's private affairs had also contributed to his downfall. He had married at sixty-two and a son was born to him five months after the wedding. The old Field Marshal considered this scandalous. The Ullstein Press published a photograph showing Groener proudly pushing a perambulator along the street. This sealed his fate. After the heated dispute with the Nazis in which Goering took a leading part, Schleicher calmly informed Groener that the Reichswehr would prefer his resignation. Groener was stupefied. He resigned the Reichswehr Ministry, holding his post of Minister of Interior, and Schleicher became his successor. Bruening still hoped that he could save his Cabinet.

During the Whitsun holidays Hindenburg took a vacation on his Neudeck estate. Here the Junkers from the neighbourhood gathered and complained to the President against the agrarian Bolshevism of Bruening. Meissner arrived with a complete list of Papen's proposed Cabinet and Hitler's acceptance. Hindenburg found this a splendid solution, especially as von Papen was an aristocrat and a Roman Catholic. The Minister of Interior would be the old Freiherr von Gayl.

On the 29th May Hindenburg sent for Bruening. The Reich President rebuked him sharply, even if not very coherently, for the Bolshevistic plans and told him that he would not sign any more emergency decrees. Bruening bowed his head. He had his majority in the Reichstag but he could not rule.

without Hindenburg and the Reichswehr. Five minutes before noon on May 30th, 1932, he announced his resignation.

At four o'clock in the afternoon Hitler and Goering arrived at the palace. Goebbels had telephoned to Mecklenburg, where Hitler was waiting, and drove down with Goering to meet him. They faced again the old gentleman, who informed them that he had dismissed Bruening and that Papen would be Reich Chancellor. Would that be all right? Hitler assented. The Reichstag would be dissolved and the S.A. again permitted. That was all—the audience ended. Hitler and Goering had hardly spoken a word.

Of course both Hitler and Goering knew, or at least hoped, that the Papen Cabinet would be only a transient affair. Goering was detailed by Hitler to discuss the actual questions with Papen; they met repeatedly. On the 20th July, Prussia, the last stronghold of Social-Democrats, was made safe for Nazi-ism by the creation of Reich Commissioners who controlled the State government. This measure had been decided by von Papen. He summoned the acting Minister-President of Prussia, Hirtsiefer, Severing, the former metalworker and Social-Democrat, and Klepper, the Minister of Finance. He told them that he had proclaimed a state of martial law; the three ministers were dismissed; he, Papen, was taking over supreme authority in Prussia. Dr. Bracht, chief burgomaster of Essen, had become Reich Commissioner. He visited Severing and told the Prussian Minister of the Interior that he must give up his office. Severing would not yield

and demanded that he should be ejected by force—even if symbolic force. Dr. Bracht agreed.

Eleven days later the Reichstag elections were held.

\* \* \* \* \*

The elections brought almost the full expected success of Hitler. He won 230 seats in the Reichstag, less than half but more than a third. His Party was now the strongest.

He had full right to demand the Chancellorship for himself. But he was not sure that Hindenburg had changed his mind about the 'Bohemian corporal.' And if he should fail, it would certainly mean a tremendous loss of 'face.' So on the 7th of August he visited Schleicher, who held out fresh hope. He drove back to Obersalzberg and with Goebbels drafted plans of government. But on the 9th August he was visited by Strasser, Frick and Funk, his economic adviser. They told Hitler that he had been deceived; Papen had not the slightest intention of resigning.

Hitler was furious. Goering and Goebbels advised him to mobilise the S.A. He accepted the reckless counsel and the troops were massed round Berlin, while in East Prussia and Silesia the Nazis began to murder their political opponents with true German thoroughness.

Of course this changed the mood of Schleicher and Papen completely. Schleicher rebuked Count Hell-dorf, leader of the Berlin S.A. Papen proclaimed martial law. There was no talk of Hitler getting any share of government power.

But Hitler proceeded to Berlin and arrived there on the 12th August. He made an appointment to be received by Hindenburg next day. On the 13th August he met Schleicher and Papen at the Reich Chancellery. There his fears were confirmed. Hindenburg would not have him as a Chancellor. Hitler protested hotly. He fixed his eyes on the ceiling and talked talked talked as Schleicher reported later. Papen said in a tone of resignation:

Speak to the old gentleman yourself!

Hitler drove furiously to the Goebbels house where Goebbels and Goering were awaiting him. They also knew that Hitler's rejection had already been decided and that the interview with Hindenburg would be only an humiliation. Then the telephone rang and Frick, who was also present, answered it. Under Secretary Planck was informing the Nazi leaders that the President was expecting Herr Hitler at a quarter past four. He assured them that the decision was still quite open; it depended entirely on the conversation with the President.

With Roehm and Frick Hitler drove to the President's palace. It was a grave blunder to take Roehm. Hindenburg detested him and saw an insult in his presence. He neglected to offer seats to his visitors and simply read out the plans for a Papen Government. Then he asked Hitler whether he was willing to co-operate? Hitler murmured wearily that he had already communicated his terms to Schleicher and Papen. The Vice-Chancellorship which they offered him was not enough. So you want the whole power? asked Hindenburg. Hitler tried to explain: yes, he wanted to be

Chancellor, but only like Mussolini      Whereupon  
Hindenburg told him sharply that he regretted Herr  
Hitler's reluctance to support a Government which  
had his, Hindenburg's, confidence especially in  
view of Herr Hitler's promise given before the  
elections

Papen took good care that a detailed account of  
the interview was published and a detailed reference  
made to the broken promise

alliance with Bruening—the Nazis and the Centre would have had an overwhelming majority in the Reichstag—but the ex-Chancellor would not hear of his violent, revengeful plans. In his fury he made an allusion to Hindenburg's age (the Reich President was eighty-five) and to the fact that he could not live for ever. This again incited public opinion against him.

But Schacht's warning about the dangers of an extremist economic policy took effect. Hitler again became mistrustful of Gregor Strasser. Goering did not fully understand the import of the catastrophic interview of August 13th; but Gregor Strasser did and he warned Hitler not to insist on a dissolution of the Reichstag and new elections. The popularity of Hitler and his Party had been heavily impaired and he was certain to lose a great number of votes.

On the 30th August the Reichstag met. The Nazis had the honour of giving a Speaker to this parliament. Hitler had to choose the man who would best represent his interest. He chose Goering.

The temporary Speaker was the oldest member of the House—Clara Zetkin, the Communist deputy. In her opening speech she violently attacked the Nazis. But Goering was elected, and the first man to preside in the brown shirt of the S.A. took possession of the Presidential chair.

There was to be no nonsense about impartiality and objectivity from the former air captain. His opening speech shows this plainly:

"I promise to enact my duties impartially, justly and according to the present rules of the Reichstag. I shall take care to guard the order and dignity of

this assembly," he began. But his next sentence gives the lie to the preceding ones: "But let there be no doubt about my suffering anyone to bandy about the honour and dignity of the German people here. I shall also guard jealously the honour of German history. I wish to state clearly: this meeting of the Reichstag has proved that there is a large and active majority in it and therefore no question of a civil emergency can arise. The fact of a national presidency gives me the hope that I shall be able to fulfil my duty as Speaker and that the honour of the people, the safety of the nation and the liberty of the Fatherland can be my guiding stars."

for dissolution, Goering took the count. Five hundred and thirteen votes against and thirty-two for the Papen Government. Hitler was sitting in the adjoining palace of the Reichstag President, where Goering had been installed for the last twelve days. There was a dramatic encounter between Papen and the Reichstag President. But while Goering was adding up the votes, Papen produced a slip of paper with the wavering letters of Hindenburg, declaring the Reichstag dissolved; this precious piece of paper had been fetched by Meissner from Neudeck.

When the counting of votes had been finished, Goering calmly read out Hindenburg's message. He maintained that this could not be valid, as the Papen Cabinet had been already overthrown; the dissolution was contrary to the constitution. But the deputies left the Reichstag with the problem in their minds: had the Reichstag been dissolved or had the Cabinet been overthrown? Nobody could answer this hair-splitting question; but Papen did not worry about it. He fixed the new elections for the 6th of November.

The election campaign began and had never been more violent, the speeches surpassing each other in personal attacks. Goering, the Reichstag President for twelve days, took a fair part in the fight. He 'let himself go,' as Goebbels had done whenever he got the permission of the Fuehrer.

"What was the meaning of our last gigantic electoral triumph?" he thundered. "Nothing else but that Adolf Hitler must be given the power. Why is the age-old parliamentary custom ignored in this case; a custom not created by us? Only



because the Government is clinging to its post, being afraid of the Fuehrer; because they know that we shall restore the lost rights of the people, according to the principles of our movement, not only nationally, but socially raising them from the morass into which they have been trampled. . . . How dare this Government maintain that we have no national conscience? I reply to this accusation: where was your national conscience when you delivered the power without second thought into the hands of red scoundrels? Had you considered reasons of home or foreign policy or national interests when we had to endure all those Chancellors after the war? Who has fought against Bolshevism and Marxism, who tried to dam the pestilential red flood? Only one man . . . Adolf Hitler . . . whom they are trying to discredit abroad with national phrases and whom they want to divide from the German people which has nothing but belief in him. . . . Where are the very best of the workers, the middle-classes, the finest representatives of German nobility? Not with the Government but with Adolf Hitler! Who has bridged the differences, crushed the idea of class struggle, re-awakened the faith in the unity of the people? Not this Government, but Adolf Hitler! They talk about standing above the parties and about chivalry; but this is only to catch votes. They talk of a large programme which does not mean a thing and hardly differs from that of former Cabinets. They brag of overthrowing the black-red system and a few months ago they were the noblest supporters of it; they have voted for it all these years, reigned over the

German people together with its representatives. There is only one critic of this system, one man who proved what a lie and deceit it is ; one man who has gathered thirteen million people against it—Adolf Hitler ! . . . ”

He accused and slandered, bragged and threatened with formidable power and an almost sincere conviction. He compared Hitler to Bismarck. He promised and cajoled ; ending up with a grand finale :

“ We want not your votes, we want your hearts ! Now everybody must confess his true colour. Remember the words of the divine Master : ‘ Hot or cold, I spew out the lukewarm ! ’ Raise the flags, march on to victory ! ”

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There was no victory. November 6th came, a desolate winter day. There were seven million unemployed and in the strikes Nazis and Communists made common cause. But the trust in Hitler had weakened ; and the Nazi Party lost two million votes.

At the same time the Party had debts amounting to twelve million marks. There were symptoms of incipient dissolution. Hitler's struggle for power became a life-and-death scramble for money.

Shortly after the November elections Schleicher set a trap for Hitler. He urged Papen to retire and got Hindenburg to invite Hitler to take over the Government, but there was an indispensable condition—a majority in the Reichstag. This time the interview was more cordial, but he did not swerve

from his terms. This was impossible. Hitler would be at the mercy of Bruening and Hugenberg who could overthrow him whenever they wanted. Hitler tried to argue both personally and by letter but it was all in vain. But Hitler avoided the defeat by publishing the correspondence between Hindenburg and himself thereby he forestalled his opponents. Yet this manœuvre led to a breach with Schleicher and a conflict with the Reichswehr.

Interminable conferences and intrigues followed. On the 2nd December 1932 the Papen Cabinet resigned and Schleicher took over the Chancellorship. He planned to destroy Hitler. He sent for Gregor Strasser and offered him the Vice Chancellorship. Strasser asked the Fuehrer. Hitler vacillated as usual. Frick and Gottfried Feder favoured the compromise. Goering and Goebbels were against it. A turmoil of plots and counter plots followed. The complete chaos in the relations of the Party leaders again became evident. It was first Strasser and Goebbels against Hitler then Goebbels for Hitler and against Strasser. Strasser hating Roehm. Goering fighting Roehm and Strasser. Frick and Feder intriguing against Goebbels and Goering. Amann against Strasser. Goebbels and Goering—changing alliances, loyalties and denunciations all this went on for several days. On the 3rd December the Party lost half its votes in Thuringia where upon Strasser presented Hitler with the ultimatum of accepting or refusing Schleicher's offer.

In the meantime the Reichstag met again. There were 197 Nazi Deputies still a considerable party. The temporary President was old General Litzmann.

a strong sympathiser with National-Socialist principles Goering sat in the first row—a long way from the back bench of 1928. He was elected President again.

"The will of the people has spoken," he said. "It will be followed at last by the action of liberation."

The Reichstag deputies were a little flabbergasted when they saw their Speaker using a pair of opera-glasses during the session. But Goering wanted to single out his friends and foes, he had a list prepared with photographs and in a couple of days had every body docketed in his mind.

of 4th January Hitler returned from his mysterious excursion. He had met Papen at Cologne and there followed a complete reconciliation.

Papen promised to pave the way for Hitler with Hindenburg while Hitler renounced his intention of a revolution.

Yet Schleicher opened the gates for Papen and his plans for a coalition government in which Hitler would have a strong share. Hindenburg still wanted to have Papen for Chancellor but Papen himself persuaded him that Hitler would be better—it would make no difference in the Government he maintained. At last Hindenburg yielded. Schleicher lost his trust especially when on the 29th January the false news was sprung that the Reichswehr planned to arrest Hitler. Papen and even Hindenburg's son.

In the summer of 1932 Hitler had met the Reichswehr District Commander von Blomberg. Blomberg became an adherent of Hitler but kept his political conviction a secret—till this very moment. Now he was brought by aeroplane—he must immediately take over the Reichswehr Ministry.

There were still some difficulties to overcome. Hugenberg demanded a share in the Government so did the *Stahlhelm* led by Seldte and Duesterberg. Hugenberg also opposed the dissolution of the Reichstag. But Hitler gave him and the *Stahlhelm* leaders his word of honour that all the ministers in the Cabinet would remain there after March 5th—regardless of the coming election.

And so at last on the 30th January 1932 Hitler had reached his goal. A little before eleven on that

momentous day he arrived with Goering at the house of the old gentleman. He and Papen faced Hindenburg. Papen accepted the post of Vice Chancellor but he would have the real power. At last, so he thought—and found out too late that he was mistaken.

Goering rushed out and declared with a radiant face

The Fuehrer has been appointed Reich Chancellor!

Hundreds of thousands thronged in front of the Chancellery. Hitler left the dignified building and drove to the Kaiserhof. Goering was already waiting there with Roehm and Goebbels. Tears streamed down the face of Adolf Hitler.

At five o'clock in the afternoon there was the first Cabinet meeting. Hitler had already had a long discussion with General Blomberg. At his side now sat the faithful (or rather more or less faithful) henchman Hermann Goering, no longer a jobless flyer, a man fighting for the daily bread—but Hermann Goering, Minister of Interior of Prussia and Commissioner of Aviation.

An hour later he was at the Ministry of Interior. He could not curb his impatience to start his work at once. He felt it only fitting that the building housing the Ministry should have been once the Prussian Academy of War. Now a soldier was sitting in it—a soldier who was more a man of action than the scheming generals like Groener and Schleicher.

Outside the first brown battalions were marching to start the torch procession. All around him there was a deathly silence. So many of the officials had

backed the wrong horse and were now in hiding. A Councillor and a Section Chief were waiting outside, but Goering did not want to see anyone. This was his reward, the hour of his dreams fulfilled. He stayed at his desk till late in the night and then went to the Chancellery to meet his colleagues. The great torchlight procession was still marching. Hindenburg was at the window, beating the time of the military marches with his crutch-stick. Hitler was laughing, leaping in his joy, gesticulating wildly. Goering stood with Goebbels. He, too, was almost frantic with joy, even if he did repress it better than his leader. But when the procession ended, he spent the whole night awake. There was much to do and his boundless passion for action could find almost unlimited scope.

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The Communists and members of other Left-Wing parties were stupefied by the unexpected move. There was some talk about a general strike, but Hitler's position was too strong and many joined the S.A. and S.S. who had been in the opposite camps up to then. Success is the best propaganda and success certainly came to Hitler and his satellites.

It was Goering's task to prepare ways and means for an absolute, dictatorial power, for the shredding of the last semblance of a constitutional régime. His first move was to create the *Gestapo*, the secret State police which he put under the command of Heinrich Himmler. But the police itself had to be reorganised completely to serve the grim aims of

Prussia's Minister of the Interior On the 23rd February he appointed Police Major Wecke of the *Schutz* (Protective Police) to create a special branch It was to be formed in two days Wecke chose a few officers and together they selected the most reliable—and the toughest—men

On the 25th February the first battalion was mustered with 14 officers and 400 sergeants Its barracks were in the Friesenstrasse Lorries motor bicycles and machine guns were collected

This was the day for which—according to Nazi historians—the Communists planned a big armed rising But nothing happened—at least not on that day nor yet on the next

Then dawned the 27th February 1933 and in the evening occurred one of the most mysterious events in German history the Reichstag began to burn

Hundreds of articles dozens of books and pamphlets have been written around this incendiary fire In the course of the great trial of Torgler Dimitroff and the rest the allegation of Communist incendiarism has been disproved There can be no reasonable doubt that the culprits have to be sought in the ranks of the National Socialists

There is a strange document describing the whole plan Karl Ernst Berlin S A Group leader who was shot in the great purge of 1934 is the alleged author of this document which he was supposed to send with an accompanying letter to Edmund Heines in Breslau Later these two documents were published in the *White Book* by the Carrefour publishing house It is doubtful whether it was



really Karl Ernst who wrote the letter and the confession but it may be that both of them emanated from a person who was closely connected with him and knew more about the course of the Reichstag fire than anyone else

According to this document it was Hermann Goering himself who conceived the idea of exploding a great election bomb by an act of incendiarism Goebbels suggested the Reichstag The man who writes in the name of Karl Ernst declares that at about a quarter to nine on the evening of February 27th he and two companions forced their way into the great assembly hall of the Reichstag they smeared chairs and tables with a phosphoric substance and drenched curtains and carpets with petrol At five minutes past nine their labour was completed and they set fire to the building The young Dutchman van der Lubbe had been employed to divert suspicion—but his role the part of a man who was reduced to a drivelling idiot is extremely uncertain

However the Reichstag went up in flames and Adolf Hitler became a dictator

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Goering was the man detailed to reap the grim harvest He had organised his Secret Police so well that it seemed to be trained expressly for this special emergency In the night of 27th February about four thousand Left Wing leaders were arrested Their newspapers and party organs were suppressed Goering ruthlessly pursued anyone with the slightest

Left-Wing tendency; this was the hour of reckoning for which the Nazis had been waiting so long.

On the 2nd of March there was a huge raid led by Goering himself. Early in the morning, twenty-five motor-cyclists left the barracks in the Friesenstrasse. Hundreds of swift cars followed. An hour later the whole quarter of the Kuestrinerstrasse was surrounded. Every house was searched, every suspicious person arrested; twenty-seven men were thrown into prison; arms were collected. Almost every day there followed raids and unexpected attacks. Goering was untiring and deputed this work to his subordinates almost with reluctance.

Meanwhile he remembered his old comrades, the flyers. In March, 1933, he created the Association of German Aviation Sport (Deutscher Luftsportverband) and gave a job to his trusty friend Bruno Loerzer. The other associations and clubs were all dissolved: the German Aero Club was selected as sole representative of Germany abroad. Germany must not have any air force; but two months after becoming Commissioner for Aviation, Goering prepared the way for the quick growth of such a force; the National-Socialists could not be bothered with the terms of the Versailles Treaty.

Goering is nothing if not systematic. On the 1st April, 1933, the political positions of local Chief Presidents in Hanover, Kurmark and Schleswig-Holstein were filled with trusted Party members. Later he put new men at the head of all the twelve districts. Out of the 361 Prussian County Councillors 260 lost their job. Out of the total of 488 executives 76 per cent. were replaced by men selected by

Goering himself. Of the 373, 340 were members of the Nazi Party while the remaining 33 hastened to join in order to retain their offices.

The same thing happened in the administration of justice in Prussia. One hundred and thirty-nine district attorneys were retained; of these 126 were Party members. The assistant attorneys—127 of them—were all National-Socialists. Goering believes in thoroughness.

The 7th April, 1933, saw the publication of a law relating to the 'rehabilitation of professional civil service.' This law wanted to create a system by which even those who had somehow succeeded in retaining their positions, although they were not Nazis, could be ousted from the jobs. Goering thought that a porter or a State Secretary were of the same importance if it came to a question of giving jobs to hungry National-Socialists or keeping former opponents from earning their living.

In the same month he formed the Air Protection League of the Reich to replace the disunited organisations which had tried to work out a system of A.R.P. in Germany. Up to the time the local associations had worked without any co-ordination and it is to Goering's credit that this impossible state of affairs was ended. No doubt, it is easier for a man with dictatorial powers to get things done—but the planning and foresight cannot be denied in Hermann Goering's case; especially if there are aviation problems to be solved.

On the 11th April, Hitler sent Goering to Rome. He had now the 'three cars' which he had thought

some years ago to be essential for a visit to Mussolini, but his régime was too new to risk leaving Germany himself. So his ambassador flew in his place. Goering had the indubitable advantage of knowing the Duce and could explain Hitler's friendly aims in a proposed Italo German alliance.

The Prussian Minister of the Interior was happy to fly his machine himself. It was a fine feeling to hold the joystick in his hands and direct the plane over the Brenner along the Delta of the Po, over Ravenna Peruggia to the Rome airport. Some days earlier he had christened the first new four-engined Hansa plane—giving it the name of *Hindenburg*. It was the beginning of a huge plane building activity and the aerodrome of Tempelhof was crowded with jubilant pilots who saw in their new Commissioner a man after their own heart. The Reich President himself was present and inaugurated an almost feverish period in German aviation.

But now Rome appeared under the wings of his plane and Goering effected a perfect landing. Some members of the German colony in Rome were waiting for him at their head Ambassador von Hassell. He handed Goering a wire addressed to Minister President Hermann Goering.

Goering opened it with keen interest. It contained his appointment as Minister President of Prussia demanding that he should be in Berlin on the 20th of April to take over his office.

Congratulations. Goering greeted his old comrade Paul Koerner whom he had immediately appointed as his State Secretary. Slow to forget and long to

remember—this was always one of his characteristics, one of his main redeeming features

The same night Goering had a long conference with Mussolini at the Palazzo Venezia. It was followed by several other discussions. Goering's task was made easier by the fact that Balbo the daring Minister of Aviation had been his friend for some time and that he knew most of the leaders of Fascism fairly well.

used in different States of Germany This co ordination was especially important

A little earlier on his initiative there had been a meeting of different experts at the palace of the Reichstag President They had discussed the new National Socialist economic and financial programme Goering attended but his forte was certainly not finance In May 1933 he had turned against the guilds which in their modern forms tried to create a little security for the middle class artisans He had also considerable trouble with informers who tried to ruin their trade rivals by denouncing them as Communists Now that some of the violence of the movement had been spent he recognised the necessity for creating a certain stability in economic life to consolidate the Nazi victory

But there were lighter matters in the midst of the heavy going On the 9th May the Hunting Association of the Reich (Reichjagdbund) offered the Minister President the Honorary Presidency Goering accepted and decided to take a fair part in the reorganisation of the German hunt This was the beginning of his famous diplomatic hunts premiers and regents foreign ministers and ambassadors are among the guests of his hunting expeditions he himself visits different countries with the convenient pretext of grouse shooting or pig sticking in order to confer with other politicians and to act the part of Hitler's diplomat As Chief Forester of the Reich he has not only added a picturesque title to his many others but found an outlet for his colossal energy

On the 19th May, the new Prussian Cabinet presented itself to the Prussian Diet. It was a strange meeting. Outside, mounted police and soldiers; inside cowed and docile members willing to vote on anything and surpassing in their humility any Hollywood yes-man.

"Prussia has returned to its glorious tradition of being the foundation and mainstay of Germany," declares Goering. He himself felt like a reincarnation of the great soldier-king Frederick, even if there was a Fuehrer above him.

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The remaining months brought feverish activity and a wide-scattered field of responsibilities. On the 16th of September the solemn opening of the Prussian State Council saw the complete reorganisation of the Prussian State Police. Goering gave them flags and shields. At the same time the complete change of police executives had been finished. Out of the 37 Police Chiefs 36 had been removed and their posts filled by new men—a small detail in the whole avalanche of changes Goering has made, in many cases personally. At the beginning of October he granted his first interview to a hostile foreign newspaper. Jules Sauerwein, of the *Paris Soir*, was very much struck by Hermann Goering. He writes:

"Goering is neither a theoretician nor a mystic; he is a human being; a violent, passionate man with an incredibly quick sense of perception, with a sarcastic wit and uncontrolled outbursts caused by a strange sentimentality. Few men give the

impression of a wider and more charming spontaneity; his power of expression has two facets: rough frankness and personal impulse. Goering is a power."

A fine tribute from a much-travelled journalist—and a concise explanation of the evident contradictions in Goering's nature.

Then came the aftermath of the Reichstag fire. The Leipzig Court was packed with foreign journalists; the world was avidly following the trial of Dimitroff, Torgler, van der Lubbe and the others. The sensation of the whole proceedings was the duel of the Bulgarian Dimitroff and the all-powerful Prussian Minister President. Dimitroff had been proved innocent, but he had not even the protection of the simplest legal guarantees; he had spent months in chains; he had to fight against a hostile judge and a swaggering Hermann Goering.

And yet the incredible happened: Dimitroff attacked Goering! His questions were persistent, searching; trying to pin the Reichstag fire on his mighty opponent. And Goering was clearly embarrassed by the prisoner's attacks; if it was not his person, then it was the order and spirit for which he stood which was attacked here. Dimitroff even dared to ask:

"No doubt you are afraid of my questions, *Herr Ministerpraesident*?"

Goering lost his temper and roared:

"You will be afraid of me when once you get out of here, you scoundrel!"

Painful silence. The President ordered Dimitroff to be led away. But it was too late. The brief



exchange of words had produced a political effect all over the world; Goering had proved that no legal guarantees could exist in a Nazi Germany. He was surely a man of violent passions and frank brutality. And he must have been furious when Dimitroff slipped from his fingers and was exchanged for some Germans living in Russia. Only the drivelling idiot van der Lubbe was executed and the Reichstag Trial petered out ingloriously. . . .

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But in the meantime there was so much to do and to enjoy. On the 15th November the Prussian law of the constitution of communities (villages, little towns) was published. Goering wanted to control every activity of his Prussians and wanted to help the struggling villages and little towns in the way he preferred, untrammelled by old restrictions. Later on the same law was adopted more or less unchanged in the other States of the Reich.

On the 1st December the management of forests in Prussia was taken from the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture and subordinated to Goering's power. Being the Chief Forester of the Reich he started his work by trying to save the woods of Prussia. In this he succeeded more or less, although even he could not avoid the red tape hindering quick and decisive steps being made against insects, fires and wood-poachers.

A fortnight later he stopped the authority of city, county and village councils; from now on they would be simply tools in the hand of central administration without any power or initiative of

their own. The same day a law was passed about the air organisation of the Reich. There is no independence now in this respect among the legislatures of the different States; a flying police is created and all authorities are put under the orders of the Air Minister.

Christmas arrived and Goering opened the prisons: five thousand people were freed, most of them imprisoned by mistake or by the denunciation of envious rivals, personal enemies. This action certainly brought him a good deal of popularity. He had done much in the first year of National-Socialist régime, but he was impatient to try his hand at many other things.

### XIII

1934 started at the same furious pace which had reigned in Hermann Goering's life for the past two years. In January, he had to usher through the Reichstag the law of the German forests; a programme was fixed for fifty years and the Reich Forester combined with the Aviation Minister by introducing planes to disinfect the woods against harmful insects. The regulations of fire-fighting were changed and heavy fines imposed on people *smoking in protected forests*. The Forest Office was created for the whole Reich; another position with ministerial rank for Hermann Goering. The affairs of forests and hunting were all referred to his

authority. The independent organisations of the different States were merged with this supreme office. While in 1932 the working days in the woods have shown the figure of five and a half millions, this number was increased in 1934 to nine and a half millions. The average working days of foresters and their assistants was one hundred and eight days a year in 1932, against seventy in 1934. Hundreds of thousands of unemployed found employment there—and if their pay is bad and their hours are long, they are nevertheless better off than they have been.

Then Tempelhof claimed his attention. The building of aerodromes had been sadly neglected in Germany. Goering found a special pleasure in providing modern buildings. Huge plans were prepared and Hitler himself issued a command in February, 1934, to rebuild and enlarge Tempelhof, to create a chain of small and large landing-fields all over the country. There were 123,000 landings in 1934 at Tempelhof and Goering succeeded in raising this number to 220,000 by 1936. He started the building of a covered landing platform, of modern landings for blind flyers, huge hangars seating 60,000 spectators when something is 'on,' a large, up-to-date hotel. He also took care of insurance in aviation both for pilots and passengers, solving several problems more or less well in his stride.

After a year of trial-flights the Hansa began in February, 1934, the regular air-traffic across the Southern Atlantic with the passenger plane 'Westfalen.' In the same year a ship called the 'Schwabenland' was created to serve as a base in case of forced landings.

All work and very little play. Even Goering's iron constitution could not stand such a multitude of affairs. In March he addressed a request to Hitler to transfer the authority of the Prussian Minister of Interior to the Reich Minister. He proposed Dr. Frick to take over his position which he may have found irksome. The Fuehrer accepted; he and Goering exchanged polite and laudatory letters and Goering had one job less to look after.

But there were still his beloved hunting friends. In March, 1934, he created the officials of the hunt; and the permits were strictly revised according to political and—yes—racial standpoints. Nobody was allowed to follow a stag or even to shoot rabbits if he had not qualified for the severe conditions which Hermann Goering laid down. After he had created 'order' in Prussia he forced the other States to adopt his measures. And when, on the 3rd July, 1934, he was appointed Master of the Hunt for the whole Reich, he felt another ambition fulfilled.

In March already he had begun the 'fight of work' for the whole of Prussia, trying to reduce with all means unemployment, trying desperately to make good the boasting promise of his Fuehrer: after the coming to power of the Nazis, Germany would become an Eden on earth. In November, he must already wage a battle against the rising of prices. Supplies had been hoarded by certain elements and Goering thundered: "In a time when all of us have to make sacrifices and where the workers have already proved their willingness to make them in the interest of our country's rebuilding,

it must be considered a crime to try and set private capitalistic profits above the general well-being of the people. Punishment cannot be severe enough."

\* \* \* \* \*

But not everything was smooth sailing. There was trouble brewing and Hitler himself felt that powers were at work which might easily lead to his overthrow ; to the collapse of his whole, desperately hard-earned authority in civil war and mass executions. Roehm had become Reich Minister, Chief-of-Staff—and was only an ex-captain. He became a member of the Reich cabinet as a minister without portfolio—and could not enter the army so long as Hindenburg was alive. For the 'old gentleman' hated him like poison and by his rigid code of morals had every reason to do so.

Now Roehm started a violent dispute with Blomberg. He had demanded that the Reichswehr should take over the S.A. bodily. Blomberg rejected the proposal vehemently.

Goering was introducing Swedish stags and hinds into the coppices of Brandenburg and East Prussia ; he was completing the reorganisation of the Protective Police by bringing up its strength to 8,000 men ; he was studying the feeding habits of East Prussian elks and tried to transport wild duck from a distance of several hundred miles ; and all the time things were coming slowly to a head and the purge and bloodshed approaching.

At the beginning of June, 1934, Hitler sent for Roehm and made an appeal to his friendship. He asked him not to quarrel with the Reichswehr.

Hindenburg's death was approaching and he should have patience for a while. Roehm replied that three million S A men were worth twice the Reichswehr but Hitler told him that under such filthy leaders he did not want the S A to fight for him.

Then came Papen's part in the grim tragedy-comedy. He was a vice-chancellor without the slightest influence. Hitler deceived him. Goering and his Gestapo brutally persecuted him. He collected a few men around himself—the Ministerial Permanent Secretary Erich Klausener, the leader of the Catholic Action, the Conservative publicists Dr Edgar Jung and Dr Walther Schotte and his personal collaborators von Bose and von Detten. He was supported by the Catholic clergy, the more so because during the early summer of 1934 a campaign of the unruly and brutal regional leaders of the Hitler Youth had started against the Catholic Church.

On the 17th June Papen delivered a speech to the students and professors of Marburg University which caused a considerable sensation. He attacked Goebbels and Rosenberg and also of course Goering. About the latter he said that anyone who spoke of Prussianism as an ideal should have in mind in the first place quiet and impersonal service and last of all—or better still not at all—reward and recognition. To Goering who had collected quite a number of titles and positions in an amazingly short time this allusion must have been particularly painful.

A few days later Goering's secret police arrested Dr Edgar Jung. He managed to scrawl the word

Gestapo on the wall of his bathroom—then he vanished, never again to be seen alive.

Goebbels tried to belittle Papen's speech. Hitler rebuked him in a private interview. But Hindenburg congratulated him. The crisis was approaching.

\* \* \* \* \*

At this stage another figure reappeared on the hectic platform: Kurt von Schleicher. He desired a return to power and speculated on Hindenburg's death. He prepared a new Cabinet list. Hitler would still be Chancellor, but Schleicher would get the Vice-Chancellorship, Strasser would be in charge of economic affairs and Prince August Wilhelm of Prussia would be given the post of Reich Vice-Regent. This princeling had joined the Nazi Party in 1930, and had served as a show-piece at National-Socialist meetings. But nothing more; and in all probability he had no idea of his figuring on Schleicher's list. But Goering had him carefully watched.

There was another surprise. Roehm was to be Reichswehr Minister. Again it was probable that he did not know of the whole plan; the whole list might have been the work of an *agent provocateur* and even Schleicher innocent of it. But it served as an excellent pretext for alleging a conspiracy for accusing Roehm, Schleicher, Strasser and the others of combining against Hitler.

In reality it was a struggle for life between the foundation and framework of the State and the colossal parasite of the National-Socialist Party. The contest was waged both outside and inside the

Party Goering as Prime Minister of Prussia head of the police and chief of the whole civil service represented the State Roehm with his army of three million stood for the Party The Fuehrer himself together with Hess was neutral and helpless—up to a certain point

On the 8th June Roehm went on leave he set out for an iodide cure to Bad Wiessee on the Tegernsee and stayed at the Hanselbauer sanatorium On 1st June the regular annual general leave of the S A began Roehm started his holiday with a few wild days in Heidelberg so wild were they in fact that the leading students associations threatened to have him flogged out of the town Roehm left He had a special plan independent of both Papen and Schleicher He would set the S A in action probably in the autumn to demand his due share and the share for the S A leaders Because the spoils had not been enough for all those who wanted to share them The S A leaders felt cheated Some of them had become chiefs of police others were pocketing a thousand marks a month as Reichstag deputies or functionless members of Goering's Council of State Roehm himself was a Reich Minister without portfolio whereas Goering in Prussia could and did give away public domains distributing lucrative posts flinging a few seats in the Council of State like alms to the hungry S A captains (Conrad Haiden) Roehm was planning some enterprise into which he hoped to drag Hitler against his will

Now Hitler had to choose between the Reichswehr and the S A And he chose the Reichswehr



On 24th June, the decision seems to have been made. On the 25th the Reichswehr and Goering's S.S. had been mobilised. Karl Ernst, the Berlin group leader, learnt of it and telephoned both to Blomberg and Goering to ask them whether anything particular was afoot. The answer was: no, nothing.

Hitler was in Upper Bavaria, inspecting the construction of a motor road. Rudolf Hess, his *alter ego* broadcast in Cologne. It was a remarkable speech.

"Anyone who has been privileged to share in the Fuehrer's movement for a long time will be magnanimous towards human idiosyncrasies and weaknesses in leaders of National-Socialism, if they go hand in hand with great achievements. And he will condone the little weaknesses for the sake of the great achievements."

This is a last-minute peace offer. It was also a warning. "Revolutions in States with a complex modern economic life cannot be conducted after the pattern of the paltry annual revolutions of small exotic republics." An allusion to Bolivia where Roehm himself had conducted such revolutions. It said plainly: if you give up your plan of fighting Blomberg, you will once more evade submission to Goering.

Goering and Blomberg had probably decided Roehm's end; but Hitler would have liked to save him once again. . . .

On the 27th June, Goering spoke in the large hall of the Cologne Fair. The hall was packed. He made his first allusion to the 'dissidents.'

"We shall finish them. The German people do

not think of anything else now except to keep the priceless glory of unity."

He pledged his faith in the Fuehrer and ended:

"Those should be guilty of high treason and expelled from our community who want to shatter the faithful belief of the people in the Leader; who want to undermine this holy faith. We shall be hard and ruthless to the very last consequences."

Next day the Gau Leader Terboven celebrated his wedding at Essen. Hitler and Goering were his witnesses. A huge lunch was spread. In the midst of it Hitler received dispatches. He motioned to Goering; together they left the room, to go to the Hotel Kaiserhof. There a conference began lasting till midnight. On the 29th, Hitler arrived at Bad Godesberg (places and dates always return like pointers of fate in the Fuehrer's life) and spent the day there. Roehm was at Bad Wiessee. There he had summoned Heines, Hayn, von Krausser, Schneidhuber and many others of his subordinate leaders. Ernst stayed in Berlin and Goering had gone there from Essen.

Roehm was expecting Hitler at Wiessee. He believed that the Fuehrer was coming there for a conference with his sub-leaders. And at 2 a.m. on 30th June, Hitler flew from Bonn to Oberwiesefeld in the company of Goebbels, Lutze, Otto Dietrich and his adjutants, Brueckner, Schaub and Schreck. At the same time a number of district leaders had been summoned to Munich by telegram.

In Berlin and in Prussia Goering had invested the enemy with a close and solid net, large enough to catch some extra private enemies of his who had had

nothing whatever to do with the affair. In Munich, Adolf Wagner, the Minister of Interior, had made everything ready; the leaders of the S.A. were already arrested when Hitler arrived. He spent only two hours at the Munich Ministry of Interior; at half-past six he was back on his way to Wiessee. And there, in the annexe of the 'Hanselbauer' sanatorium the rebels or would-be rebels were arrested. Count Spréti, Ernst Roehm, Heines, Reinér. Everything was accomplished in half an hour. On their way back to Munich Hitler's cavalcade met the S.A. leaders who were innocently making their way to the conference at Wiessee. They were halted; the suspects separated from the 'good little boys.' And Hitler silently dragged his prisoners to the place of execution.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Some days ago he ordered me to strike as soon as he gave the word, and he entrusted me with executive powers for this purpose. . . . A second revolution was prepared, but it was made by us against those who had conspired."

This is part of what Goering said on 1st July, one day after the purge. In the meantime the courtyard of the Stadelheim prison echoed the volleys of the execution squads. The slaughter went on for hours. Senior S.A. group leaders, group leaders, staff adjutants, brigade and regimental leaders fell one after the other. Ernst Roehm was given a revolver to shoot himself, but he chose the firing squad.

Goering and Himmler carried on the work in

Prussia Behind the 'red walls' of Lichterfelde in the courtyard of the former cadet training school the same slaughter went on as at Stadelheim Here fell Karl Ernst Regimental Leader Gehrt, a famous war aviator with the *Pour le Mérite* order, had been pardoned by Goering but later executed by mistake All day long people in the neighbouring houses heard the shots

Late in the night Prince August Wilhelm received a summons to report himself to Goering Anxious and alarmed he obeyed

When he reached the ante-room of Goering's office he saw men whom he knew most of them important S A leaders

Some of them were led to the left others to the right The Prince soon realised that the one meant death the other life

When he was admitted at last, Goering looked at him with contempt

You really have the most foolish face I have ever seen he said

The Prince kept his counsel Goering showed him the Cabinet list in which the Prince figured as a vice regent and asked

You were a friend of Ernst ? "

Yes

When did you speak to him last ? "

At such and such a time

Where and how ?

On the telephone

What about ?

The Prince said that Ernst merely wanted to say good bye before he left for his vacation

"Lucky for you that you've spoken the truth. . . ." He started a gramophone and the Prince heard an exact record of his telephone conversation. "I don't believe," continued Goering, "that you had anything to do with the Cabinet list. But, of course, you wish to go to Switzerland for a few days."

The Prince protested that he never had any such plan. Goering cut him short :

"I have already told you that you have the most foolish face in the world ! Of course you wish to go to Switzerland for a short time ! "

The Prince understood and left.

\* \* \* \* \*

Against the man who had made the Marburg speech, Goering pitted his own arbitrary authority. Papen himself he did not dare to catch ; but a whole group of his colleagues (Edgar Jung, Councillor von Bose, Dr. Walther Schotte, Erich Klausener and some others) were shot down. So also was General von Schleicher, whose plotting had started the purge, and his colleague General von Bredow and the old dissenter, Gregor Strasser. It was a wholesale killing, unrestrained and checked by Hitler only with the greatest difficulty. The German 'St. Bartholomew's Night' marks one of the bloodiest pages in German history. But now at last Hitler and his henchmen could rest in peace ; they had quelled every opposition and killed off all the recalcitrant elements. The real 'arrival' of Nazi revolution was the 30th June, 1934.

\* \* \* \* \*

After this it sounds almost mild and tame to give an account of the rest of the year 1934 in Hermann Goering's life. On 2nd July the 'old gentleman' who found a grim satisfaction in Roehm's death sent him a congratulatory telegram for his energetic and successful suppression of high treason. Goering had advanced—he was now a General of Infantry and scheduled for even higher honours. Next day the Reich Cabinet was sitting—it was the last meeting before the short summer holidays. As if there had been no volleys and dramatic journeys three days ago they discussed the question of the Reich taking over all authority in game and forestry questions. Thus Hermann Goering added the title of Master of the Hunt for the Reich to his already numerous titles.

But the same Cabinet meeting passed a law against high treason and gave indemnity for all acts committed during the hectic hours of 30th June. It also fixed the policy of the Reich Government for future emergencies: no trial and no external jurisdiction would be necessary for dealing with traitors. The Fuehrer's person was declared to be sacrosanct and the procedure simplified even in case of minor offences.

About this time a certain anxiety abroad forced Goering to declare his aims as Minister of Aviation. In the House of Commons several questions had been put about the rearmament of Germany in the air. Goering stated calmly but defiantly that there could not be any limitations to the development of civil aircraft.

We shall continue this work, he said in August

1934, "not only in the interest of German economic life, but also for the sake of Europe and the world. Germany is the heart of Europe and we have special duties to build bridges in the air from country to country, from continent to continent. The better and the more perfect the German organisation of aerodromes, radio stations, weather observatories and lines of night flight can be made, the smoother will be the international and inter-continental air traffic."

That most of the German planes can be converted into bombers at very short notice is something he does not mention. But there is no need to do so. Foreign powers know very well that Hermann Goering is building up a formidable air force—even if the Treaty of Versailles has made different provisions for a once down-trodden Germany.

The National-Socialists then busied themselves with the task of winning over the still hostile populace. In September, 1934, Goering released two thousand prisoners—most of whom had been jailed by mistake or on anonymous denunciations—and thus ended the so-called 'protective custody.'

#### XIV

HERMANN GOERING was not only Hitler's diplomat ; soon he became his master of ceremonies. If there was a foreign ambassador to entertain or the head of another State had to be dazzled by Germany's

prosperity and social accomplishments it was Goering who gave the party or organised the displays. He was certainly capable of making a good impression even if he was sometimes hard beset to discipline the often uncouth Nazi leaders. A great many of them were very much self made men and not very sure of their manners.

It was at a particularly glamorous reception at the palace of the Prussian Minister Presidents—which Goering had rebuilt and redecorated according to his very elaborate plans—that a number of S A leaders had helped themselves much too liberally to the splendid cigars of the host. By the time black coffee was served there was not a single Havana in sight.

Goering looked around and said *sotto voce*

I didn't know that this room was so excellently ventilated. Three boxes of cigars are gone and *there isn't any smoke!*

He left the room—and by the time he returned the cigar boxes were again filled by some mysterious force.

\* \* \* \* \*

Up to the end of 1934 there had been officially no German air force. But Hitler had declared that Germany would rearm with or without the consent of the other powers and Goering had been looking forward to the time when he could organise a strong and formidable air force. Although the announcement was made by Hitler only on the 16th March 1936 Goering had already created the first bomber squadrons on the 1st March 1935. Up to that time



military pilots had been disguised as civil flyers but now they wear the same distinctions and are on the same pay as the officers and N.C.O.s of the regular army. Goering collects men from infantry, cavalry, artillery and the navy.

On the 14th March, the German air force is created an independent branch of the regular army. And Goering thinks it only fitting that his first squadron shall bear the name of Richthofen. And Goering tells the world frankly :

" As long as I am at the head of German aviation, I shall never be able to rest till I have convinced Germany and the world : we are helpless if we are unable to defend ourselves in the air. We demand equal rights and nothing else. If other nations are willing to disarm their air forces, Germany is going to follow suit. But if they are preparing for war in the air, we shall make the necessary preparations to get the guarantees of security for Germany. Adolf Hitler's Reich is a country of Germans again. We shall not subscribe to any outside influence nor any meddling with our affairs. German history shall be made by Germany alone."

On the 10th April, 1935, Hermann Goering married again. Emmy Sonnemann had been an actress—although one of strictly classical rôles—and Goering met her while he was 'disciplining' the unruly theatre folk in Prussia and Berlin. She is tall, fair and matronly—and there has never been the slightest bit of scandal attached to her name. She may not have the flair for handling people, the fanatic *verve* of Karin von Fock—but she is a fitting spouse for a man who has to represent a somewhat recluse

Fuehrer and is constantly the cynosure of an almost overwhelming publicity. But she has retained a weak spot for her former colleagues. When, in March, 1936, Goering, with his wife, visited the home for retired actors and actresses, Emmy Sonnemann succeeded in raising the interest of her husband in the plight of these unfortunate people. A year later the Emmy Goering Home was completed in Weimar.

## XV

ROEHM had perished when he wanted to incorporate his S.A. in the regular Reichswehr. Less than two years after his violent death Goering partly succeeded in realising Roehm's plan. On the 7th March, 1936, Adolf Hitler proclaimed that Germany would rearm and demand equal rights in armaments with all the other nations. In the same month German troops marched across the Rhine, occupying the 'demilitarised' zone. And in the subsequent days, after his long and characteristic speech at Weimar, ending the new election campaign of the Nazi Party (not that there was any other Party left in Germany), Goering incorporated in the Reichswehr 56,000 members of his State Police.

Of course, the Gestapo still remains independent and under Goering's immediate orders. Its members are carefully selected from the 'most reliable class.' Up to May, 1934, 8,000 members of the Nazi

Party were enrolled in the Protective Police. Even if he had relinquished 56,000 men, his police organisation represented a fair-sized private army.

Now he could turn again to his beloved aviation.

\* \* \* \* \*

Goering had never been an economist. He had himself confessed that statistical figures and curves bored him to death. He was more of a spender than a saver; and yet, as a strange contrast, he had a certain shrewd understanding of economic catch-words. If he was uncertain of the aims, he had an eye for ways and means. That was the reason why he had been selected by Adolf Hitler as the director of Germany's Four Year Plan.

For Germany needed a Four Year Plan just as badly as Russia needed its Pjatiletka and Italy Mussolini's grandiloquent Rebuilding Scheme. Not even National-Socialism could balance the difficulties in buying raw materials, in working out a budget which would enable the country to fulfil a gigantic programme of rearmament and at the same time keep alive. 'Guns or butter,' Goering formulated the controversy and it was his task to force the people to prefer guns.

At the Party Congress of 1936, the Four Year Plan was announced.

"In four years Germany must be independent of all the materials which German talents, our chemistry and industry, our machines and mines can produce. I have just issued the necessary decrees for the realisation of this huge German

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economic plan. The work will be carried out with National-Socialist energy and zeal!" announced Hitler.

In the spring of 1936, Dr. Schacht, Blomberg, Minister of the Reichswehr (he had been made a Field-Marshal in the meantime) and the Minister Kerrl had asked Hitler to appoint Goering as the dictator of the Plan. In April, 1936, Goering was charged with the final authority in all questions of the raw materials and currency. Goering collected a number of associates—among them a good many non-Nazis, for according to Hitler an economic expert was worth a great number of zealous Party members who had no idea how to deal with practical questions—and by the 2nd September, he had his executive plan ready. On the 18th October his appointment was made public.

"Minister President Lieutenant-General Hermann Goering is appointed to take the necessary steps for the fulfilment of his task and is entitled to issue decrees for the whole Reich. He is also entitled to direct and command all authorities, inclusive of the highest officials in the Reich, the organs of the Party and the affiliated associations."

In 1936, Germany welcomed the leading athletes of the world for the Olympic Games. Goering was again the Master of Ceremonies and his huge evening garden party in the grounds behind the new Air Ministry was worthy of any oriental potentate. An English guest described it with glowing enthusiasm :

"The swimming-bath was strewn with lilies floating in the glow of underwater lamps, while the broad expanse of turf was floodlit by anti-aircraft searchlights mounted on the roofs around. . . . After the *corps de ballet* of the Berlin Opera House had danced on the lawn before an audience sitting at supper under trees festooned with coloured electric lights, a screen some fifty or sixty yards long on the farther side of the garden, was suddenly withdrawn, revealing a full-size Viennese fun-fair, with merry-go-rounds, shooting galleries, switchbacks and picturesque wine- and beer-booths where pretty young German actresses in Tyrolean costume were waiting to receive the general's guests."

"Only poverty-stricken countries can afford a show like this," was the remark I heard from a famous German financier amid the din of laughter, music and gaiety.

The cost of the evening must, indeed, have been considerable, for there seemed to be as many entertainers as guests, but as an original and attractive spectacle it was marked by all that efficiency on which General Goering insists in every undertaking with which he is associated."

While Hitler was making speeches, Goering was

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This is certainly a complete dictatorial power, second only to that of the Fuehrer himself. At the same time it serves as a motive for envy. The Goebbels-Goering feud which is still going on, dates from these days.



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giving parties. There was the first dinner party given in his capacity of Commander in Chief after the reconstitution of the German Air Force had been openly declared. Goering wore the full dress of the air force with his numerous decorations. He was especially interested in the various uniforms of the foreign air attaches and the British seemed to catch his fancy. The short mess jacket was something new to him and soon he had made an almost exact replica except for the emblems and facings. It seemed that German independence was not so rigidly enforced if it came to importing a foreign fashion in uniforms for the Dictator of the Four Year Plan.

Mr Ward Price who knows 'these Dictators' so well, furnishes a lively description of Goering in private life which is well worth quoting. \* he describes the great ball at the State Opera House in February.

General Goering and his wife sat in the former Imperial box which is big enough to form a spacious reception room. At supper with them there during the last ball they gave I met the Duke and Duchess of Brunswick the son in law and the daughter of the ex Kaiser who are often to be seen at important Nazi functions. Sir Henry Detering the oil magnate and his young German wife at least a dozen officers of the Italian Air Force in uniform, and most of the members of the German Government.

\* *I Know These Dictators* by G Ward Price George G Harrap & Co 8s 6d

though the Chancellor himself does not appear on these festive social occasions.

"It was one of those *gemütlich*, informal supper parties so dear to Germans, with beer for the thirsty as well as champagne. Frau Goering, who is certainly the best-dressed woman in Germany, made a radiant hostess, with her natural golden hair, fair North German complexion, and musical, well-modulated voice.

"The General himself was in Air Force mess-dress, at one moment talking raw-material problems with Sir Henry Deterring the next, kissing the hand of a pretty actress; then turning to the Polish Ambassador to describe how he had shot two lynxes on his recent hunting expedition in Poland; or shaking his head over a caviare sandwich with an exclamation of: '*Ach*, these Bolshevists! They can't even send us good caviare nowadays!'"

A little more interesting are Goering's views on Germany and Britain.

"We respect and like the British race," he has told Mr. Ward Price. "You are akin to us by blood, and we wish to see you a strong and powerful nation. We do not mind how big an air force you build. Raise a National Service Army if you like. Germany is quite content that Britain should make herself as strong as she considers necessary.

"With our two countries in agreement, the peace of Europe would be on unshakable foundations. Who could stand against the British Fleet and the German Army?"

## XVI

Now came the falling out of an important personage. Field Marshal Blomberg married a girl whose social standing was far below his own. Hitler, none too squeamish about the private life of the associates, eagerly seized the opportunity to rid himself of a man whose popularity was beginning to be painful. Goering greeted Blomberg's downfall with glee, one rival the less meant a step more towards the final power. And so, under the pretext that the Reichswehr would not countenance the marriage of its Commander in Chief, Blomberg was made to resign. He was one of the few who had succeeded in keeping Hitler from rushing in where diplomatic angels feared to tread. After his going the way was open for the invasion of Austria—even if it had provoked a war.

In the memorable March 1938 Hitler summoned Chancellor Schuschnigg to his mountain retreat. There he told him with brutal frankness that he intended to seize Austria and would suffer no resistance. Schuschnigg still trusted in the help of France and Great Britain, but within a week of his visit to Berchtesgaden he found out that he was mistaken. German troops entered Austria and Schuschnigg was left to meditate in the Hotel Metropole on the vicissitudes of fate.

There can be no doubt about the ethnographic and

economic justification of the *Anschluss*. Here were seven million people, speaking the same language (although a Styrian would have some difficulty in understanding a Saxon), possessing a more or less common heritage, having been united once in the Holy Roman Empire. Austria, crippled by the St. Germain Treaty, was like a hydrocephalic child. More than one-sixth of its population lived in the capital and Vienna, without the Imperial glory, was a dead town. People may have tried to recapture some of the romance and gaiety of pre-war days; but poverty, internal strife and the uncertainty of the future soon stripped off the mask of spontaneous fun and vivacity. For Austria the *Anschluss* was a natural conclusion to the last twenty years; but for the Austrians—except the Nazis and even they were quickly disillusioned—it was unadulterated hell.

But Hitler marched into Austria and on that March Sunday the loudspeakers blared forth his triumphant speech. Famous actors and actresses were set scrubbing the walls of houses and the pavements; writers and journalists, gossiping all night-long in smoky cafés, were dragged off to concentration camps; cars were requisitioned for the Nazi Army, but their owners were expected to go on paying for the garaging; a new flood of refugees was let loose on the western democracies; and Goering had another seven million people on whom to try out his Four Year Plan.

Then came Czechoslovakia. The main trouble in the whole problem and the stand of Great Britain and her Allies was that for once Hitler had ample justification for his demands. There were *really* more than three million Germans in Czechoslovakia, the mad and careless map makers of Versailles had *really* drawn the borders without the slightest consideration for national feeling, economic justice or any other sane point of view. The hectic weeks from August to October 1938 made it plain that this time the demands were not unreasonable—a state born of hate was going to dissolve by hate and destruction. It was only the manner in which these demands were put forward—the bullying of a smaller opponent—the bamboozling of the great Powers who had a say in these things which made Hitler's behaviour particularly reprehensible. The speech at the Sport Palast when he abused President Benes like a vulgar fishwife certainly did not make the right of self-determination for the Sudeten Germans more evident or acceptable.

A new Europe is being born, said Marshal Goering in his speech just after the Munich agreement. But whether it will be a lasting Europe, whether the problems of Austria and Czechoslovakia and their people now passed under German rule will be settled as easily as they and their new overlords think is a question which cannot be answered.

Meanwhile Goering, Hitler's diplomat, took his part in the recent events. Just before the Munich

conference he was reported to be ill; the strenuous days of the Nuremberg Party Congress had sapped even his boundless energy. But after a few days he recovered and entertained Polish and Hungarian guests in East Prussia. He had his share in preparing the invasion of Czechoslovakia as Commander-in-Chief of the German Air Force and figured prominently in the Munich talks. His white uniform was a vivid contrast to the sober garbs of both dictators and the French and British statesmen. Just after the agreement had been reached, Field-Marshal Goering expressed his desire to see Paris, a city justly renowned for its art treasures but his suggestion was not received with very warm enthusiasm. There are, however, other cities in which Hermann Goering would be welcome and there is still plenty of work for him to do.

a great difference in age and certainly not big enough to raise any hopes of succeeding a statesman who is still vigorous enough to defy the world. On the other hand, should anything happen to Hitler, the question of his successor will be a very acute one. There are many aspirants for a dictator's throne and Goering is certainly one of them. Perhaps his qualities are more suitable than those of soxy Dr. Goebbels or suave Ribbentrop. Hermann Goering would never rebel against his Fuehrer—he has learned the lessons of 30th June, 1934—but he certainly would not accept any other authority.

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The wisdom of Babylon has never been expressed so fully as in the maxims which the German Martin Jaeger discovered and translated. They contain a 'Warning for Rulers.'

"If a ruler does not take heed of right, his people will be annihilated, his country ravaged.

"If he guard not the law of his land, Ea, the King of Fate will change his fate; he shall be led into various plights.

"If he listen not to his adviser, his days will be shortened.

"If he heed not the sage, his land shall fall away from him.

"If he shall heed a scoundrel, the mood of his country shall be changed."

An ancient warning, as fresh and valid to-day as it was many thousands of years ago.



Shall Hermann Goering's days 'be shortened'? Shall he be led 'into various plights'? Nobody can tell. But so much is sure that many surprises can be expected from the man whose name has been prominent in the most startling and most successful political movement of our age.